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CHALMERS COMES BACK

By W. J. DAWSON

THE WAR EAGLE
A Contemporary Novel

ROBERT SHENSTONE
A Novel

THE FATHER OF A SOLDIER

AMERICA AND OTHER POEMS

CHALMERS COMES BACK

BY

W. J. DAWSON

AUTHOR OF
"THE WAR EAGLE"
"ROBERT SHENSTONE"
"THE FATHER OF A SOLDIER"
ETC.

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THE LONG VENTURE

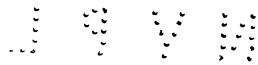
WHERE THEY LIE

Under the whip
Of scourge-keen hail
And winds that fall like a heavy flail
On the stripped earth, pale lip to lip
They lie, whispering,
Like children with fast-claspt hands in bed
Who speak of things they love and dread,
And fling
Arms round each other and closer cling
For every angry gust of rain
That rattles the ghostly window-pane.

Always I hear them whispering,
And they are telling an old tale
Of Joy that did not last,
Of brief Amazement past,
Of Love that won no guerdon,
And the long grief and hard Burden
Of Hope deferred—
The little things that stirred
The heart to great pain,
Such as letters that did not come,
Not a word,
From careless lover or friend,
Loved, who loved not again;

And the waking from dreams of home
To cold dawns and misery without end.
Or of larger griefs they speak
The harassed line that would not break,
The rage, the surprise, the wonder
Of the long retreat,
And the guns' pursuing thunder:
Of the peace of comrades dead,
Gathered beyond all striving
And all the anguish of living
Into a bosom broad and sweet
Where they were comforted.
O God, it was hard to bear,
The error of it hard to pardon,
To hope so much and dare so much, yet share
Always the Cross and never the Easter Garden.

So they lie,
And not for them any more
The bleak road and the miry ways,
And the grey low-hanging sky,
And the fierce fixed gaze
Into the eyes of Death.
Not for them any more
The painful breath
Of broken bodies, over-tasked
By the urge of the spirit
Giving more than was asked;
And the passion for merit
And the old torturing fear
Of being thought afraid,



Of failing and being dismayed
In the final test, when very clear
Coming unaware and very near,
Insistent, like none heard before
Blew the bugles of Death—
O not for these,
Who lie so composed, in such deep ease,
Shall these things be any more.

But where they lie
Under the wide grey sky
And all the changing weather
Flowers have begun to gather—
Here and there a patient violet,
And poppies for a scarlet coverlet.
Always poppies, and sweet-scented clover,
With the bees hanging over;
And lush grass nourished on blood,
And in the place where horses stood
A green spear of wheat,
Nodding like a girl who dances
With shy intimate advances
And tremulous feet;
And through the shimmering heat
A lark's song is sweet,
And sometimes there is rain
Like a cool hand easing pain;
And there are stars that wink and nod
Like lights at sea, or like home-lights
In the windows of God,
Or like tiny lamps on evil nights

Long since borne over heaped fields of dead,
Symbols of infinite solace; and overhead
At all times the utter peace
Where all troubles cease,
All pain of body and mind
All strife with a Fate unkind,
All the fever and flame and riot
Of flesh and spirit at strife,
All the fret and the madness of Life
Gathered up into infinite quiet.

So, where they lie
Under the folding sky
I see not corruption alone;
For the kind grass clasps the bleached bone
And violets are rooted in eyeless sockets,
And larks nest warm in dead men's pockets,
And scarlet wounds are scarlet poppies;
And, seeing this, my final hope is
That out of Evil Good must blossom,
The womb's pang and the mother bosom
Being included in one scheme,
The end being something new, a dream
Made true through Pain
That Earth must some time turn again
To the gracious ways of friend and lover
When War is over.

For these who lie
So tranquil under this wide sky
Expected this: for this they died,

For this they thrust their youth aside
And the secret things youth coveted,
And hoped would be—
The one face,
And the close embrace,
And children gathered at the knee—
Yea, even their bodies flung aside
Like blood-stained tunics, worthless quite,
And stood up in the Soul's whiteness, white
As God, who is pure Light.
God, who understands the dead,
Who leaves no soul uncomforted
That chose the right, in death's despite;
And, unless God Himself hath lied,
They in His presence shall abide,
And the hope for which they lived and died
Shall not be disinherited.

PART ONE

CHAPTER I

THE AWAKENING

I

He came out of his long trance quite suddenly. For months he had been sunk in an abyss of apathy, suffering little, thinking little, a human creature divided from the world, moving on its dim fringes like an uninterested ghost. Voices reached him, dulled as though they spoke through folds of wool; faces approached near him, but they remained remote, inaccessible, curiously alien. Men and women had passed his bed in tedious procession, had gazed, stooped over him, and gone away again. He was conscious of their good intentions, of their shrewd, kindly, wise aspect, but they wearied him. Weariness, indeed, was his chief sensation. He wanted before all other things, to be left alone. He had lost the habit of communication with his kind and had no wish that it should be restored. He figured himself as a very small object, adrift on a vast sea, which had no horizon. And he was content to drift.

He knew only vaguely who he was. His name—yes, he could remember that. It was John Chalmers. He tried at times to connote the associations of the name, but was too tired to pursue the quest very far. There were brief flashes of recollection, which were like pictures of scenery, disclosed suddenly by lightning. He saw at times a city, metropolitan, many-towered, rising from the sea, starred with a million lights. Gracious and benignant figures walked on the terraces that fringed the sea; lighted vehicles moved through the streets, bells rang, voices clamoured joyously, an immeasurable life swayed and eddied, an infinite stir and movement shook the air. He knew that he had once had a part with these multitudes, but before he could comprehend what that part was the whole vision sank into the sea, and the lighted towers went out like fallen rockets.

He saw some other things with the same brief lucidity and with the same inability to retain or comprehend what he saw. For example, a landscape of rolling hills and woodlands, autumn-coloured. A long white house with many windows, clear as water, a girl standing in a doorway with a strange look of triumph and distress upon her face. He would have liked to interrogate her, for he was sure that she had something to say to him which he would be glad to hear. And the long white house with the clear windows, and the woods with their great splashes of crimson and yellow, and the footpath that drew a dim upward curve round the hills—all were familiar, dear to him and alluring; yet they also vanished, like the pictures

children see in sunset skies when the wind drives the clouds into new shapes and conformations.

Chief of all his sensations, was the sensation that something had happened to him. What it was he did not know, but it was something monstrous and terrible. Something thrilling, too: his bones yet quivered with the joy of it. A monstrous joy—what a contradiction in terms! How could there be joy in terror? It shaped itself in his memory like a vast elation, which shook the universe. It had a voice, a peculiar quality of sound. It was like the crashing of worlds, the sublime collision of flaming planets. And then sudden darkness and impenetrable silence. It was silence and darkness with the added quality of weight. It was the closing down of something like a lid; it was as though the skies had fallen, burying the earth. He searched his mind to find images for it; he could find none vast enough. Then he grew tired of trying. He decided that he was dead. The ponderous weight that had fallen on him was the coffin-lid. It was enough that he was quiet. If this was death it was not to be greatly dreaded. It consisted merely in lying very still. There came to him the memory of words he had heard sung in churches, on summer evenings when the electric lights sprang up suddenly through the dusk of lofty roofs—

> Teach me to dread
> The grave as little as my bed.

Well, they were quite right. There was nothing to dread in being dead. It was merely going to bed in the dark.

These sensations were after all occasional, episodic, precarious. They were like the spent waves of a distant storm; they rolled up the shore of consciousness, swiftly withdrew, and all was quiet again. An immense quiet, as if a clock that he had heard all his life had suddenly ceased to tick. A quiet so profound that one could hear the blood run in one's veins, and one's pulses beat. And he had grown to like it. He thought he knew now what poets meant when they talked of "hearing the silence." He was terrified lest he should lose it. If the clock started ticking again he would want to scream, like a frightened child. He was afraid, too, of any kind of movement. If he turned in his bed it was by infinitesimal stages. If he lifted his hand, it was with the same excess of caution. As for speaking, it was many weeks since he had tried to speak. He had lost the desire to speak and, it would seem, the faculty.

So he had lain very still, a creature flung out upon the edges of human life by a mysterious catastrophe. External things he still recognised, but it was like seeing something enacted on a distant stage, which he watched from afar in a darkened theatre. He knew that there were such phenomena as dawn and darkness. Near his bed was a wide window which framed an exquisite landscape. He felt a faint thrill of pleasure when the hills grew rosy in the morning light, and he had learned to look for a bright star which hung over them when evening fell. The sound of the wind in the trees also gave him pleasure; it was like a song sung by an old nurse beside a cradle, and it

brought him the boon of sleep. He wondered sometimes what the world was really like outside that wide window and thought that he would like to explore it. Then he told himself that he was much safer as he was. Within those white walls was security; who knew what perils lurked without? He had belonged to that outer world once, and it was there his great catastrophe had happened.

II

For some days he had been conscious of a new element that had begun to work in him. It was like the rising of sap in a tree, like the soft continuous pressure of force that pushes open folded buds, like the silent waveless advance of a tide in a landward inlet of the sea. At first it frightened him; then he became curious about it. He noticed that he slept now without the dreams that had so long tortured him, and woke with a sense of well-being. He lifted his hands, not with the old caution, but with abrupt movements, finding pleasure in the act. He found his lips, which had so long been hardened in a stiff line of endurance, curved and relaxed in a smile. A weight was lifted from his heart; surely it was beating in a new way, with a fuller rhythm. Then, at last, on an unforgettable and splendid morning, he came to the full knowledge of himself. He was Captain John Chalmers of the Field Artillery, who had been reported missing, God only knew how many months ago.

He sat up in bed and looked round.

It was early morning; he knew that by the rose-colour of the hills, which he saw through the window. He saw other things, too; trees shaken by the dawn wind, a black group of pines on a rocky hill, and beyond it the immortal azure of the sea. Among the trees was a pink-washed house, with portico, balconies, and a garden full of colour. At the foot of the hill a boy led a flock of sheep, playing a shrill sweet air upon a wooden fife. It was like a Greek idyll, staged for his especial benefit.

He looked round upon the room in which he lay. It had many beds, in which men lay silent. Its walls were white and plain; the only decoration was Flags —the French Tricolour, the Union Jack, the Stars and Stripes! Something rose in his heart as he saw the flags. He would have liked to kiss the Stars and Stripes, but he was uncertain if his feet would bear him so far. It was *his* flag; how could he ever have forgotten that? And the others—he loved them too. He had seen them carried forward together in a long line of battle. Of course—now he knew. He had been wounded, and this was a hospital. He was Captain John Chalmers who had been left for dead upon the field when the Hindenburg Line was shattered.

His memory, which had been blank so long, was suddenly illumined. On the palimpsest of the brain all the past was written, but, as it were, in invisible ink. A living heat of new-born health now drew out the secret lettering. Pictures passed before his mind's

eye; marching men, horses standing in a deep ravine, dead men lying in the mire, living men hidden in the unconscious wheat, a bugle-note, a ringing voice, an immense rush forward of guns, men, horses, confused yet orderly, organised into a single unit, moving with deliberate haste to a predetermined goal—and then?—Then, the Blackness which obliterated everything, the sense of churned mud, wet earth, broken bodies, intense loneliness, dereliction, desolation, a groaning earth, whose very axles and pivots were shattered; and, pinned beneath them, God Himself, flung out and buried in the flaming ruin of his Sun-Chariot. And it was he, John Chalmers, who had witnessed these things, had been left for dead on these fields of corruption, and had been rescued after many days.

He tried to fill in the details of the picture, to recall his spent sensations. He remembered chiefly the falling of rain, a persistent persecuting rain that had no end. Heavy clouds had rolled up in interminable companies, discharging crystal rods of water that pierced like shrapnel; wet mists that travelled slowly over the soaked ground like poison gases; a grave of fetid mud in which he sank deeper every moment, a terrible silence broken only by this ambiguous voice of the falling rain. He raised his head from time to time, but he could see nothing for the rain and mist. He tried to shout, but discovered that his voice had left him. What else had happened to him he did not know. His whole body seemed broken; yet, beyond congealed blood at the back of his head and a burn-

ing pain in his right foot, he could find no evidence of injury.

Delirious dreams visited him. He dreamed of immense feasts in rooms lit by blazing fires. He dreamed of long halls, filled with the comfortable smell of hot coffee, of a piano playing, of men singing. He dreamed of hot water running in a porcelain bath, the cleanly smell of soap, the delight of warm towels. He woke to a newly intensified sense of cold, filth and hunger. A long way off he saw at last two men in blood-stained khaki. They drew nearer to him, turning over the relics of the dead with muddy boots. They reached him, stooped over him, and one of them thrust a rain-wet hand into the bosom of his tunic. They looked at one another, nodding gravely. The next thing he knew was that he was lifted gently, carried between them on a canvas sheet, laid on a mattress in an ambulance. From that moment everything became blurred to him. He faintly recognised the grind of steel wheels on iron rails, knew that he was moved swiftly over many leagues of country, reached at last the room with the wide window, from which he saw the hills rosy with the dawn, and the one star that hung over them like a punctual evening lamp. And now, at the end of this measureless period of apathy, there had come this splendid morning, when he woke as a man should, conscious of himself, and eager to possess the world which was his heritage.

III

He began to reconstruct his life. He was reminded oddly of a craze which once existed for fitting together pieces of wood cut by a jig-saw. The art of the game lay in finding the master piece. When that was discovered the others soon fell into place, and the general design became apparent.

The master piece, the key to the puzzle, he had found in the recovered knowledge of his identity. Round that he began to fit the scattered fragments of his life. His first thoughts were of his comrades in arms. There was his batman, Baldy: where was he? Baldy was not his name; it was his nickname. He was a little man, compactly built, who had lied about his age when he entered the army, representing himself as five and twenty when he was at least five and thirty, and explaining his baldness by the remark that it ran in the family. That was the origin of the nickname, to which he answered with a genial grin.

Baldy had served him with a dog-like devotion. However vile the roads and weather, Baldy had presented him each morning with a carefully brushed tunic and clean boots. And he was always cheerful, meeting all sorts of discomforts and disasters with that inevitable grin of his.

There were Foley and Crashaw, his brother officers and chief friends. Foley had Irish blood, and by virtue of it took war as a riotous adventure. Crashaw was his entire opposite—a tall lean fellow, with dark brooding eyes, and an imagination. The three had

exchanged letters on the night before the great battle. Whoever survived was to mail the letters of the others to his folk. Foley had written his in high spirits, ending with a joke on the luck of the Irish. Crashaw had written his with the solemnity of a man who makes his last will and testament. How well he could see them both as they wrote! The place was a foul dug-out lit by a guttering candle thrust into the neck of an empty bottle. It was roofed with two planks, across which the body of a dead German lay. The blood dripped from the body and splashed their clothes as they wrote, but they were too utterly weary to take the pains to remove it. Besides, they had all lived in the reek of blood so long that they were indifferent to it. That very day a German shell had found the range of their battery, and they had seen the air full of the torn flesh and broken bodies of the gunners, scattered in unrecognisable promiscuity. Had Foley and Crashaw disappeared in the same way?

The recollection of these farewell letters at once suggested those to whom they were addressed. Foley's was addressed to his mother in Baltimore, Crashaw's to a girl in Providence. The very names of these places brought inextinguishable memories, pictures of leafy avenues and sedate streets, of a white marble dome against a blue sky, of lighted trains emerging from a tunnel into thronged and spacious stations, of clamant trolleys screaming on the sharp curve of polished rails, of picture signs flaring on the soft dusk of evening clouds, with all the rhythm of the streets, and the smell of markets and of horses and

of over-ripe fruit, and above all, and penetrating all, the sharp odour of the sea. It created in his mind an overwhelming nostalgia. His heart swelled in his bosom and his eyes burned with tears. He could imagine no better heaven than these remembered places, and he wondered whether Foley had found his mother and Crashaw his sweetheart, while he himself had been sunk in long oblivion. Perhaps at that very hour Foley was going to a picture-show in Baltimore, and Crashaw sitting with his sweetheart on the sands at Narragansett. Or they might be dead—their bodies might be scattered into unremembered fragments like the bodies of the slain gunners, and their spirits drifting vaguely on the wide fields of air.

And that house with the clear windows, standing against the background of red and yellow woods—he recognised that now with heart-breaking distinctness. It was his uncle's home among the Berkshire hills, and there Mary Challoner dwelt. It was she who stood in the porch, with that strange look of triumph and distress on her face. He had gone there to say good-bye to her, and as he took her hand for the last time he had known that he loved her. She had kissed him with a cool cousinly kiss upon his forehead—and then, as though a long restrained emotion had swelled like a flood in her and overflowed, she had flung her arms round his neck, and had kissed him on the lips. They had clung together for a moment and separated with pale faces. No word was spoken, for none was needed. Then he had turned and gone down the long garden path to the gate where the automobile waited,

and had been swiftly borne away into the unknown life. It was to Mary Challoner he had written that last letter in the foul dug-out on the night before the great engagement.

He was so absorbed in these memories that he had not noticed the door of the room open and a soft-footed Red Cross nurse glide toward his bed. She stood looking at him intently.

"Good morning," he said cheerfully.

"You are better?" she asked doubtfully.

"I am quite well," he replied.

"I must fetch the doctor," she said.

She left the room, and a few moments later returned, accompanied by a tall spectacled man in uniform. He was grey-haired with keen blue eyes, and a kindly smile.

"What's this I hear?" he asked.

"That I am quite well, and very hungry, doctor."

"Ah, that sounds hopeful. Yes, it's distinctly hopeful."

He began to feel a shade of annoyance at the attitude of the nurse and the doctor. They were evidently sceptical about his statement that he was quite well.

"Do you know where you are?" said the doctor.

"No, I don't, but I know who I am. I am Captain John Chalmers of the Canadian Field Artillery, First Division, Second Battery. I suppose I've been ill, or I shouldn't be here. I assure you I woke an hour ago feeling quite well, and I'm anxious to get back

to my battery at once. How long before you can let me go, doctor?"

"Why, bless your soul, the man's as sane as I am," exclaimed the doctor. "Shell-shock—well it does sometimes happen like this . . . yes—sudden re-adjustment, like a derailed train finding the rails again."

"Shell-shock—so that was what it was, was it, doctor?"

"That and other things. Several other things, in fact. A bullet in the foot, for one thing, and a fractured skull, for another."

"What Baldy would have called a little accident, eh? He was once blown thirty yards through a trench, and he wrote home on a post-card that he'd had a little accident."

"Who's Baldy?" said the doctor.

"My batman. He was a little bald man with a perpetual grin. And one of the best fellows who ever lived."

"So you remember all about him?"

"Of course I do. Why shouldn't I?"

"Young man," said the doctor solemnly, "you may not know it, but you're a miracle. We thought we had you on our hands for keeps, but now——"

"Now I'm quite well, and I want to get back to the Front. How soon can you send me, doctor?"

"Well," said the doctor, with a quizzing smile, "you see a good deal of water has run under the bridges since we first had the pleasure of your acquaintance. As for the Front, there isn't one."

"You don't mean we're licked? Don't tell me that."

"No, I guess it's the other party that is licked. You won't be wanted at the Front any more, believe me. In fact, the war's over."

"Good God," said Chalmers, and promptly fainted.

CHAPTER II

RETROSPECT AND VISION

I

In the days that ensued, Chalmers endeavoured eagerly to fill up the long hiatus in his knowledge of the world. As the doctor had said, a great deal of water had run under the bridges since he was wounded.

In the old days, when he had thought of the end of the war, he had imagined it as a swift return from madness to sanity. The world would go to bed on a couch of horror one night, and wake the next morning cleansed and cheerful, with a clear sun shining in pure heavens. Things would all be as they were before the war, and men would be like adventurous exiles, who come back to the old home, and find nothing altered. He saw now the grossness of his error. A swift reconstitution of society was impossible. The road back to normal modes of life was as long as the road that led from them. It was the same road, and it had to be retravelled to its last weary mile.

The doctor helped him, even more than the newspapers, to adjust his mind to the new perspectives of this changed world.

Dr. Dean had a large faculty of shrewdness which sometimes reached the quality of philosophic vision. He took a deep interest in Chalmers from a scientific point of view, for his case was remarkable; and, with the recovery of his patient, this interest was transformed into warm friendship. He was resolved that Chalmers should not leave the hospital until he was thoroughly capable of taking his place in the world.

"Six months out of a man's conscious life is a pretty serious hiatus," he remarked. "You can't join up the broken parts of the mind with a silver plate as you can a broken thigh. You must be patient and let them grow together."

In his own thoughts he doubted if they would or could completely grow together. Chalmers was to him a Lazarus mysteriously raised from the tomb, and he could not imagine that the risen Lazarus was the same Lazarus who took all the pride and joy of youth to the bed of death. He resumed life, indeed, but surely upon a different plane. To eyes upon which the weight of corruption had lain, to ears filled with the black silences of the sepulchre, all earthly sights and sounds must have been altered. He would move henceforth a man aloof from men. He would speak the common language of men, but with a new accent. He would sit again at the feasts of lovingkindness, but it would be with eyes fixed on something far off, with solemn and brooding eyes that gazed through the veils of time into secrets and depths which no other could behold with him.

It was so that he thought of Chalmers, wondering

much whether this long lapse in his being would not give an entirely new bias to his character. But he felt at the same time that it was his duty to do what he could to fill up the hiatus in his mind. He must prepare him for the new world he had to live in. It was like sending a boy out into a life of which he had no knowledge. Healing the body was a light task; the more difficult task was to reconstruct the broken organism of the mind, and it was to this task that the doctor set himself with tireless assiduity.

In long conversations on the verandah of the hospital or during walks among the pine groves and beside the sea, the doctor did his utmost to restore to his patient the dropped clues of life. His text was, "It's one thing to wreck a world and quite another thing to rebuild it. One hour's bombing may tear great gaps in a Cathedral which has stood for centuries; how long will it take to obliterate the damage? And civilisation is like Rheims Cathedral, battered into ruin by the brief fury of vandalism, and it will have to be rebuilt patient stone by stone. Can it be rebuilt at all? Or, if it can, will it be in the same pattern or with a new method and intention? The most terrible thing about war is not its harvest but its aftermath."

"It's a pity we didn't exterminate the whole German race while we were about it," said Chalmers bitterly. "There are horrors burned into my memory, obscenities, bestialities, foulnesses, diabolic cruelties so unthinkable that I feel as though I were personally dishonoured and shameful in recollecting them. They've

drenched the world in such a flood of stinking vileness that it's hard to conceive it ever growing sweet again. And the worst thing about it is that by such acts they've befouled and degraded the common imagination of mankind. There's not a child of this generation who can escape thinking familiarly of things that an earlier generation of grown people never named even in whispers—rape, for instance, and the disembowelling of women, and the obscene mutilation of prisoners—mutilations that destroyed in them the possibility of fatherhood. My God, when I think of it all, I'm sorry that there is a single German left alive."

"I agree with you," said the doctor. "I regard Germany as a leper nation, and like all lepers they ought to be segregated. I think the general attitude of society will be of that nature. We shall segregate them so far as social intercourse is concerned. No man who holds in his memory Raemaekers' cartoons will be willing to sit at the same table with a German or admit him to his home; and no man who recollects Bethmann Hollweg's justification of perfidy and falsehood, will be willing to trust a German's promise or trade with him. We may do all that as individuals; but politically I suppose the most that we can do is to draw the dragon's teeth, and pare his claws, and prevent him from doing the same kind of mischief again."

"Dragons and man-eating tigers should be shot at sight," said Chalmers. "It's poor policy to shut them up in menageries. They're only harmless when they're dead."

II

Reflecting on this conversation one night, as he sat alone on a bench beneath the pine trees, looking out upon a moon-washed sea, he was a little shocked and astonished at the bitterness of his temper.

He knew that his fundamental instincts were humane and kindly. He could remember that as a boy he had often stepped aside rather than tread upon a worm. He had put tiny birds back into the nests from which they had fallen, he could never bring himself to shoot game, and his pleasure in fishing was quite spoiled by the necessity of killing the fish he caught. And he remembered, too, that when he fought through his first campaign, he had no real hatred of his enemy. He was "Fritzie"—a creature to be pitied not hated. He had shared cigarettes and chocolates with him when he had been brought into camp a prisoner. He had thought of him as a fellow-soldier, though an enemy.

But these magnanimous attitudes of mind had been slowly modified, and he could fix the exact occasion when the modification began. It was on a certain day when he was coming out of battle with a brother officer, a mere boy of nineteen named Adair. They passed a wounded German, howling pitifully in the mud.

"Poor blighter," said Adair, "don't you think I should give him first aid?"

He stooped over the suffering man, giving him such aid as he could, and promising to send a stretcher-

bearer to him, if one could be found. The German glared at him sullenly and expressed no gratitude. Young Adair turned his back to leave him. In a moment the brute drew his revolver and shot Adair dead. And at that atrocious deed, red rage sprang up in Chalmers' heart. He cursed the murderer, emptied his revolver into him, and kicked the body in insensate fury. That was the hour when he began to hate. Henceforth his foe was no more "Fritzie," but a foul monster, the product of a monstrous system, a creature of reptilean obscenity whom it was God's justice to slay and utterly exterminate.

Many similar memories haunted him.

There was Douai, for instance. When the victorious Allies had entered it, the city was ablaze, as might have been expected. The hand of wilful incendiarism had fallen heavily upon the Cathedral, the town-hall, and all historic edifices. But there was a worse thing than this malicious, useless destruction of property—there was a terrible silence in the ruined streets. Where were the people? There were none. From the broken windows, doorways and cellars, not a single human face looked out. Douai was as dead as Pompeii. A population of fifty thousand human creatures had totally disappeared.

In all his tragic experiences of war none had affected him so deeply as this. He had entered conquered cities before, but always there had been some poor remnant left, some group of emaciated faces that kindled at the approach of their redeemers. This vision of a great city depopulated, utterly without in-

habitants, swept clean of all human life, overwhelmed his imagination. Where were the old men and women, the infirm and sick, the children and the young girls? To what fate had they been designated? Under what circumstances of horror and cruelty had they been driven out from their ruined homes? One had heard of such wholesale deportations among the savage tribes of Central Africa; but here was an ancient city, treated by the boastful representatives of kultur precisely as a cannibal tribe treats a collection of miserable huts in a forest—O it was unthinkable! The silence of Douai was the most awful accusation of the Hun that the imagination could conceive. Not all the shrieks and groanings of a hundred battlefields was so charged with horror as that awful silence.

The men who had wrought this foul havoc in the earth still lived, and neither defeat nor peace treaties could change thier essential nature. The doctor had called Germany a leper nation, but the term was inadequate and misleading. Leprosy is involuntary, a misfortune that invokes pity. The disease of Germany was a purposed infection. It was a sedulously cultivated brutality of spirit. It was a deliberately fostered germ of evil. And it was not killed by the toxin of defeat—nothing was surer than that. It might be repressed, circumscribed, driven inward; but it was still there, and as long as it existed it was a peril to the entire human race.

As he looked on that benignant sea, over which the moon sailed in placid majesty, he became suddenly aware of a great temptation. It was the temptation

to seize on personal quietude by the surrender of moral energy. He had given his utmost for the world: why should he trouble further about what happened? Had he not earned rest? And, as he asked the question his eye caught the vision of the long line of white villas and hotels that fringed that lovely shore. They rose among the flower gardens, against the soft darkness of pine groves, frail and exquisite as the buildings of a dream, with many a magic casement opening on a land of faery. To them had come, in those vanished pre-war days, a light-hearted multitude, young, gay, enamoured of joy; here life had expended itself in careless pleasure, in a wild scattering of wealth, in delicate lusts, in the endless fête champêtre of wit and music and sailings on the silver sea. In the very hospital where he had lain so long these gay throngs had danced and dined, not one of whom had ever felt the least premonition of vast impending calamity. Why had they not felt it? Was not the true reason just this, that they had seized on personal quietude by the surrender of moral energy—that they had regarded themselves as absolved from the immense struggle of the human race, and had therefore lost all apprehension of those dark secret tides of evil which were pushing the world toward war?

And men had all been alike—French, Russian, British. They had assumed that society was static. They had believed the world a piece of machinery which ran itself. It needed no watchfulness. It certainly did not need watchfulness on their part. They were at liberty to eat, drink and be merry; and through

their dulled senses no warning voice reached them, proclaiming that in such an hour as they thought not their calamity would come.

Even the custodians of this vast world-machine had been infected with the same spirit. Some were obviously asleep at their posts, and, when aroused by some harsh prophetic voice, denounced the intrusion in terms of scornful irony, and fell asleep again. Was there a single European statesman who in the five years before the war had manifested the least inkling of what was coming? That no warning ever reached them was incredible. They could not help knowing what Germany made no effort to conceal—her enormous preparations for war, her growing arrogance, her boldly published schemes of world domination, the teachings of Treitschke and Bernhardi, the half-insane but wholly perilous boasts and threats and vauntings of the Kaiser. Why had they not spoken? It was not foolish to suppose that had they spoken in definite terms of warning against the growing German peril, Germany might have turned back from her fatal path; or, at least, Europe might have been prepared for the certain death-grapple. Political incompetence might be justly charged these betrayers of the peoples. There was not one of them, who, if strict justice were done, did not deserve to be publicly arraigned and publicly executed with every circumstance of infamy. But behind this political incompetence lay something else,—the relaxation of moral energy. They were not in earnest. They were not devoted to justice. They sought as the chief thing, if not their own

quietude, their own advantage, and as a result were infected with the same moral debility which characterised all these thoughtless throngs that had once dined and danced and lusted in these splendid rooms which were presently to be inhabited by pale crowds of diseased, maimed and broken men who were the victims of their folly.

And it would be so again, if the war failed to create a new moral spirit in men. The mass of men soon forget. The poor housewife would forget the bitterness of her grudge against Germany when she found she could buy German china at a cheaper rate than British or American; personal advantage constantly triumphed over wide ethical conceptions. The mass of men preferred ease to justice. They naturally sought the path that imposed the least inconvenience. But that path led inevitably to just such a disaster as had overwhelmed the world and had slain twenty million human creatures. What it all came to, whether in the bargain-hunter or the dilettante statesman, was that the pursuit of the personal life by the surrender of moral passion could end in nothing but disaster.

He had done his part, he had earned his rest—no, he must never say that. No man had done his part while he still lived in a world where right and brave things needed doing. If the millions of men who, like himself, had sounded the whole gamut of the heroic life, were to return to the world with that spirit, they would not be a cleansing salt to save the world, but a deadly poison to corrupt it.

One thing came to him with singular clearness in

this hour of reflection—the world had been miraculously re-created by its agony, it had been given a new chance. It had been cleansed and transformed by a passion for justice. After making due allowance for all the mixed and personal motives which had led millions of men like himself to become soldiers, he saw that the great shaping force had been this passion for justice. That was really the source of all the fierce hatred of Germany which filled his heart. It was clean fire, righteous anger, holy hatred. If he had not hated the brute who had shot young Adair he would have been morally emasculate. If he had not felt a rage of undying flame pass through him as he stood in the tragic silence of depopulated Douai, he would have had no right to be there at all. Not to hate wrong with all one's strength was not to love right with any true steadfastness. The world before the war had lost the power of hatred. It was submerged in a sloppy tepid tide of pacificism. It had rubbed out the lines between right and wrong, become wickedly amiable to vice, had made boast of a slushy tolerance which was the ambiguous cover of moral nakedness. It had been saved suddenly, miraculously, by being confronted with the true nature of evil. It had been purged by moral horror. And whether or no this conversion was transient or permanent would depend on the capacity of men to retain their horror of evil. In other words, it would depend on their power of hatred. If they lost that power, the world would once more begin to slide down into the mire of complacency, until at last some new and vaster

catastrophe overwhelmed it, until perhaps God Himself flung the world from Him, in fierce resentment and impatience, and closed the book of Time with the damning sentence—"Let him that is unholy be unholy still."

III

He was reminded of a trivial episode of his boyhood. He had thoughtlessly kicked apart an ant-heap, entirely forgetful of the fact that the little brown pile of earth was a metropolitan city, with a thousand streets and subways, in which the ordered, congregated lives of a thousand small inhabitants fulfilled themselves. He looked into this uncovered metropolis with curiosity, wonder, and compunction, for he saw all these tiny creatures instantly mobilised for the reconstruction of their city. They ran hither and thither carrying the white eggs that held the life of the future, they were obviously organised, they faced their inexplicable disaster with an amazing courage. There was no miracle to help them, no God to interfere in their behalf. They accepted instantly the overwhelming task of rebuilding their ruined city, urged onward by that obscure instinct of living which was the master motive of all life.

The same instinct lay at the root of all human existence. Man was driven on relentlessly by the persistent need of living. How many times had he returned after the ravages of war to plough afresh his desolated lands, to collect the scattered stones of his

temples, to build new Romes over the smoking ashes of Romes destroyed, new Jerusalems over the piles of rubbish that covered the streets where his fathers dwelt and the shrines at which they worshipped? And he would do so again. The Past could never be restored, but there was always a Future which might arise upon the ruins of the Past.

"Will it be rebuilt upon the same pattern?" the doctor had asked. The question cut deep. And if the reconstruction of society was to be upon a new pattern, wiser, stronger, more efficient and enduring, who were to be the builders and the architects? Clearly they must be men of a new order of intelligence, governed by a new set of ideals. Where were these builders of the future to be found? He meditated that question in silence and for a long time. The divine gravity of the brooding night lay round him, the moon-washed sea was like a field of light; a soft wind moved among the trees, and there was a sense of some living intelligence that vibrated through these sights and sounds. It seemed as though the Night was trying to say something, to communicate wisdom —as if the kindly-faced moon stooped down, shaping silver lips to a whispered confidence—as if God passed along the high galleries of blue firmament with a rustle of silk robes, a scarce perceptible footfall, an evocation of wordless music.

And then, upon that field of light, that shining plain of sea, he thought he saw something—a rippling movement, millions of ripples dark in the hollows and light at the edge; they moved in an ordered rhythm,

they had a strange cohesion and were gathered into distinct emerging shapes.

Ah, now he recognised them—they were the shining helmets of an army; they were glittering bayonets and guns and flags and far-flung banners, and wheels in motion, and horses stepping proudly, and exalted figures lifting beckoning and commanding hands, and musicians with soundless trumpets at their lips, and lads that beat on silent drums. They were the armies of the dead, the men of Mons and of the Marne, the trodden flesh of Flanders' fields reassembled, wearing their wounds like crimson decorations, carrying their mutilations like badges of honour pinned upon their breasts by the hand of God, with an air of solemn pride. He thought he could recognise some of them, comrades who had once jested and suffered with him, the vanished gunners of his own battery, the beloved commander whose voice he had last heard broken with anguish as the surgeon cut away his shattered right arm under the blazing lights in the base hospital. They filed past endlessly upon that shining plain of sea, and as they passed it seemed their eyes sought his. Ah, what quiet wisdom was in those eyes; they were calm as mountain pools, and of an infinite depth. What was it that they tried to say? And, as he strained forward, listening, he thought he heard their message.

"We are the dead, but the cause for which we died is not yet won. Not until justice reigns through all the earth will that cause be won. Justice for the humblest toiler as well as for the humblest nation.

The Justice that is fierce and kind, terrible and benignant, ruthless and merciful, the light that ripens the poor man's harvest and the lightning that slays the poor man's oppressor—God's justice! For that we died; for that you must live, or we shall have died in vain. Peace in itself is but a vain thing. Peace is but the bye-product of righteousness. Wherefore seek not peace, but righteousness—that is the chief thing, and the only foundation on which a new world can be built."

He sprang to his feet, quivering with the intense emotion wrought in him by the vision.

"Ah, I see it now," he cried. "This is a Soldier's World. It must be saved by soldiers. They alone have the power, the vision; they alone feel the urge of the Ideal. They must replace the politician, the academic statesman, the bargainer in human destinies—their day is done. God's hand has swept them from their seats; God's voice calls a nobler breed to take their places—the Soldiers, who, having given all for liberty and justice, are the only men who can establish them firmly on the earth."

The Vision sank into the sea, fragile as a sunset apocalypse, but it had entered the mind of John Chalmers and was to prove inextinguishable. New thoughts came to men in various ways, and a moonlight hour of self investigation by the sea may be as real a medium of a divine message as Paul's vision on the Damascus road or John's from the lonely rock of Patmos. Through the broken webs of consciousness Chalmers had sought earnestly for the true clue of life.

He had to go on living; that was the mandate of the Powers. A new sweetness of health was already flooding his veins, and his miraculous escape from death was the signal to him that he must not allow his life to be re-absorbed into the colourless average of human lives.

What he recognised as a personal peril he also recognised as a general peril. Millions of men, the very flower of the race, were returning to the beaten paths of normal existence; were they to be ignominiously re-absorbed into the grey average? They had known exaltations, agonies, sacrifices, high hours of self-surrender, the passion of virtue enraged; and in this new spirit which they had won, was a dynamic sufficient to lift the whole world to a new plane of effort. Here was a force suddenly withdrawn from the objects which had evoked it. To waste it, or allow it to waste itself, would be an incalculable crime.

A Soldier's World meant that the Soldiers' spirit must rule the world. It was the spirit of unselfish combination as opposed to the spirit of selfish individualism, the spirit of ordered confederation for the common good, the spirit of constructive idealism triumphing over personal hopes and fears and ambitions.

He himself was much too modest and simple a man to suppose himself specially designated for any conspicuous part in the reconstruction of the world. But he felt that at least it was his obvious duty to justify his existence, and how could he better justify it than by doing his humble part to prevent the world from slipping back into the old ruts which led to disaster?

And if every man returning from the wars, brought with him the same resolution, who could doubt that a new force would enter the world which might shape events, and refashion all human action in such a way that a golden age of human happiness—that long postponed and much derided dream—might become a recognisable reality?

CHAPTER III

LONDON

1

THE time came at last when even Dr. Dean was satisfied that his patient was cured. The moist Devon air, fresh with the odour of the sea and soft as a caress, had done wonders. He found himself curiously unwilling to leave Devon. His unwillingness was in large part the reluctance which every convalescent has to go out again into the tumultuous and shelterless world of men. But deeper than this was a genuine affection for the gracious land itself, with its gently rounded hills, its flowering hedges, its old farm-houses, its aspect of secular stability and beauty.

It pleased him beyond measure one day to find in an old church to which the doctor had motored him a memorial tablet which bore the name of Chalmers.

"I thought you would like to see it," said the doctor. "I can't tell you anything about it. Chalmers isn't a Devon name, it's Scotch. But as you see by the tablet there was a family of Chalmers here for more than a hundred years."

Father Bennett, an old white-haired clergyman, showed them round the church. He was reading the

daily service when they arrived, to a congregation of four persons, three old women from an adjacent almshouse, and a bent, crooked old labourer, long past work. The church was very ancient, with a fine window of stained glass above the altar, and in the south transept a marble tomb, on which, as on a bed of honour, lay the effigy of a Knight Templar. In the north transept was a monument to his wife. She lay with folded hands, and her children knelt round her in the attitude of prayer. On the wall to her left were tablets which bore the names of Fulkes, Lydes and Bullers—all old Devonshire names, and among them the Georgian tablet, with the group of winged childish heads, which bore the name of Chalmers.

There was something impressively pathetic in the sound of the clergyman's voice, reading the ancient prayers of his faith in this place where the dead so greatly outnumbered the living. Chalmers could not forbear a comment on the scantness of the living congregation, to which Father Bennett replied, "But you know I'm not reading prayers only to the congregation you see. I am reading prayers to eight centuries. I always feel that I have a crowded church—crowded with the spirits of the past, I mean."

"Have you been here long?" asked Chalmers.

"Fifty years. I came here as a young man fresh from Oxford. I've never wished to go away."

"Can you tell me anything about this monument to the Chalmers," he asked. "My name is Chalmers, you know."

"Nothing beyond the bare fact that the family

owned the Hintock property for a hundred years. The last Chalmers died in 1789. He left no issue, and the estate passed by purchase to the Fulkes. And so you are an American? But I notice you don't wear the American uniform."

"No, I joined up with the Canadians before America came into the war."

"Well, we're all one now, aren't we? At least, I hope we are. It seems to me the best result of the war so far is this real union of America and England —in which, I include of course the whole British Empire. But the war has brought many changes, and I sometimes fear England will never be the same again."

"You mean she has paid a tremendous price for victory?"

"That, of course. All the young men went from my parish in the first year. I'm proud to say that when conscription came there was no one here to take. They'd all gone. Alas, most of them are dead, and many are maimed. Two of my grandsons are among the dead."

He lifted his biretta solemnly, as if in salutation to the dead, and continued.

"No, I fear England will never be the same again. At the beginning of the war I hoped and believed that men's thoughts would turn anew to the Church. It seemed natural to expect it. Men's minds were solemnised. But it seems to me that that wave of emotion has long ago subsided. People have got used to the thought of death, not in the way that makes the

soul turn to its Maker, but as an incentive to grasp eagerly at the passing satisfactions of the flesh. I can make allowances, many allowances. I hope that I am not uncharitable. But it seems to me that every one to-day is going with a looser rein. It's so even in this little village of Hintock. The spirit of restraint has gone, and the people are no longer looking to the Church for guidance."

"Did they ever look to it for guidance?" interpolated Dr. Dean contentiously.

"Ah, doctor, I know your views, and you know mine. We have discussed them more than once, but I think, if you will allow me, we won't discuss them now. I don't think your friend would be profited by our contention."

He spoke with a quiet smiling dignity.

"I'm an old man, doctor, and I should like to die in the faiths which have consoled me for fifty years. You are wiser than me in many ways, but I must still cling to the wisdom which assures me that without a true knowledge of God no nation can be truly great. And the Church is surely the divine custodian of that knowledge."

They moved out of the beautiful dim church into the green churchyard. Deep woods surrounded it, in which the cooing of doves was heard. The air was fragrant with violets and hawthorn. To the right of the graveyard was the gabled almshouse, where the old women stood in the doorways gazing vacantly across the familiar scene. It was difficult to imagine war in this green nest of immemorial quiet. Yet

from these humble thatched cottages, which showed here and there through the trees, men had gone who had done deeds worthy to be matched with the most valorous of the old Knight Templar who slept immutable under the coloured light of the transept window. Perhaps Chalmers had met them without knowing where they came from. He recalled the British soldiers by whose side he had fought in the last great weeks before he fell, men of Devon and Lancashire, indefatigably cheerful, calmly stubborn, unconsciously heroic, masters of a jesting virtue, profanely pious, unseriously serious—strange to think how many of them had come from places like Hintock. Yes, he had known them, as men knew one another from whom death strips all disguises; and, knowing them, he felt that he had known England—not the superficial England misunderstood by the casual trans-Atlantic visitor, but the deep-hearted England, nourished by centuries of patriotic valour, whose ultimate faith is Cromwell, whose final voice is Shakespeare.

And it pleased him, too, to think that the Chalmers who had once owned the Hintock estate might possibly be a distant ancestor. As he looked at the grey church, the old almshouse, the deep woods, he had an unvanquishable sense of something dear and familiar in the scene. It was as though obscure ancestral memories stirred his blood, buried instincts of possession—the very marrow of his bones recognised the primal earth from which his flesh was fashioned. And even if this was but an imagined reminiscence, he knew that he was one with England now by another

and a deeper bond, by shared experiences, common ardours, hopes, faiths, perils, sufferings. And he felt, with Father Bennett, that whatever bitter things the war had wrought, it would not have been in vain, if its issue was to bind together in a more real community of thought and feeling Great Britain and America.

"What a splendid old man," said Chalmers, as they drove away.

"Yes," said the doctor, "I've really a great affection for him, though in our thinking we are hemispheres apart. He is one of the most learned men in the English Church, especially in patristic literature—a true Newmanite, but with a humble saintliness which Newman never had. It is for his saintliness I love him, but his mind lives altogether among the dead centuries."

"It seems to me a wonderful thing that such a man should be content to bury himself in a little place like Hintock. I was struck by what he said about having come to it fresh from Oxford and never wishing to leave it."

"That's both his strength and his weakness," said the doctor. "In a sense it is both the strength and weakness of the English Church. Men like Bennett are perfectly content to feel that they are administering a great organisation, even though it be in the humblest capacity. It's the Jesuit ideal—the only noble thing about Jesuitism. But this excessive humility stunts the mind. It forbids growth, it's hostile to what appears to outsiders a right relation be-

tween ability and occupation. I've no patience with it. I feel about it just as I should about a first-rate surgeon who chose to shut himself up in a remote hamlet and refused to come out. No man has a right to waste himself, especially in times like these."

"He didn't speak very hopefully about the times, did he?"

"No, and in that respect he showed more appreciation of modern conditions than he usually does. He's perfectly right when he says the spirit of restraint is gone. We doctors know it. It's not our business to talk of it. The less said about it the better. A high emotional strain is always a provocation to sensuality. Every one in these parts knows that religious revivalism is always marked by a fine aftermath of illegitimacy. The war with its tremendous emotional strain has produced similar results, but upon a much larger scale. The point where Bennett is wrong is in thinking that the Church can control this new license. It can't. It isn't masculine enough. Bennett is utterly wrong in imagining that the tremendous realities of the war will drive men to the Church. England is much more likely to become a nation of freethinkers."

They were passing through a lovely country of red earth and lofty trees which looked almost blue-black against the luminous grey of the sky. The road ran beside a park, where many trees had been felled. A clear trout stream flowed through it, and on a gentle eminence rose a gabled house of yellowish freestone.

"That's Hintock House," said the doctor. "The

place where your ancestor lived, if he was your ancestor. The Fulkes have it now. Alas, there's only one of them left, and he's maimed for life. The chances are that the estate will be sold again before long. It'll probably be bought by some rich profiteer. That's the kind of beast who will presently gobble up all the ancient estates of England. Unless, as seems likely, they're cut up for potato fields and destroyed in the interests of national utility."

He spoke with a caustic bitterness, beneath which deep emotion was discernible.

"Do you really mean that?" said Chalmers.

"I sometimes think I do," he replied sadly. "Man and boy I've lived here for fifty years. I've guddled trout in that stream and poached pheasants in yonder coppice. I've felt a kind of personal pride in those great parks and old houses. It's said that Raleigh visited at Hintock House and Grenville slept there during the weeks before the Armada was sighted. I never pass beautiful places like Hintock Park now without saying to myself, 'Look well at it, for it's doomed. All the chivalrous and stately life that has gone on there is coming to an end. The Fulkes and the Raleighs and the Grenvilles will mean nothing to this new generation. The old England is dead. The new England will be wholly utilitarian, and will permit no romance to interfere with its utilitarianism.'"

"Is it really as bad as that?" asked Chalmers with a smile.

"I fear so. Be thankful you're just in time to see

the old England. If you should come again in twenty years you won't find a trace of it."

Beyond Hintock Park they climbed a steep hill, from which the sea was visible, and a little travelling tuft of white smoke which indicated a passing train.

"The afternoon express for London." said the doctor.

"When shall I be able to go to London, doctor?"

"Do you want to go?"

"I must go. My reason is very prosaic—clothes."

"I wouldn't stay there very long, if I were you. The less you see of cities and the more you live in the country for some months to come the better for you. Besides, London's rather depressing just now. It's like a man waking after opiates, very shaky and of uncertain temper."

"Nevertheless, I wouldn't like to sail home without seeing it once more. It's grown dear to me. The most vivid memory which many of us will carry home with us is of London in the dark days of 1917, stubbornly joyous and refusing to acknowledge the possibility of defeat."

"You speak more like an Englishman than an American," said the doctor, with a quizzical glance.

"I've a right to. Haven't I a supposititious ancestor, with a mural tablet in Hintock Church?"

"Well, the truth is I don't want to lose you. But if you are set on going to London, I think you can go next week. Don't forget me altogether when you're gone."

"I'm not likely to do that, doctor, I owe you too much."

"There's nothing men are so willing to forget as their debts," was the doctor's ironical reply.

II

A week later Chalmers said farewell to the hospital. The doctor motored him to the station, and there were tears in his eyes as they parted. His farewell gift to Chalmers was a basket containing an elaborate lunch.

"You can get nothing on the train," he said apologetically. "We haven't yet got back to the happy age of dining-cars."

The train was crowded. A big steamer had discharged her passengers at Plymouth. Three Red Cross nurses returning from Paris, two young naval lieutenants from Malta, and a long-bearded, sad-faced elderly civilian shared the compartment. As the train sped Londonwards through the Devon landscape, the young lieutenants were wild with boyish pleasure. They ran from side to side of the compartment, looking out of the windows, calling each other's attention to the towers of old grey churches, the tall elms under which the red cattle stood, the tiny watercourses, the snug farmhouses, the orchards and the gardens.

"By Jove, there are sheep," cried one, "real sheep."

They apologised for their excitement with the remark that it was three years since they had seen England.

The Red Cross nurses smiled gravely. There were tears in their eyes.

"It feels like being born again to come back and find everything as you left it," said one.

The conversation became general.

"Beastly place, Malta," said one of the young lieutenants in reply to an enquiry from Chalmers. "It's all heat, dust, flies, and a fair chance of fever. Worst of all, nothing doing that's worth while."

The other became more explicit. He explained that they belonged to the Motor Boat Patrol. The Patrol was the eyes and brooms of the Navy. Every day the tiny boats put to sea, scoured the nooks and crannies of the coast with patient assiduity, destroyed floating mines, rescued torpedoed crews and kept general watch and guard over the Grand Fleet.

They recognised nothing perilous in these pursuits. Before they were transferred to Malta they had been at Scapa Flow, a God-forsaken rock amid wild tumbling seas, treacherous tides and whirlpools, the true Ultima Thule. They had driven their tiny boats through mountainous seas, drenched to the skin by sleet and spray, their very clothes mildewed with incessant damp, their rough food poisoned with gasolene. They had done much of their work at night, along an iron coast, storm-swept and full of rocks, from which all buoys and lights had been removed. But they preferred the Hebrides to Malta, because at Malta there "was nothing doing."

"I suppose you were at the Front, Sir?" said one of them, addressing Chalmers.

"Yes, I had three years of it. I'm just out of hospital."

The nurses looked at him with professional interest.

"You are quite recovered?"

"I believe so. Shell-shock, and some other things, you know."

"I wish I'd been at the Front instead of with the M.L.'s," said one of the lieutenants gloomily.

"You'll have all sorts of splendid things to remember and tell about. We've nothing."

The sad-faced, long-bearded man turned himself, and said quietly, "My son was at the Front. He's dead. He was my only son."

He swallowed hard and looked at Chalmers.

"His name was Hector Bainbridge. Captain Hector Bainbridge of the Canadian Field Artillery. Did you ever meet him, Sir?"

Chalmers shook his head.

"I hardly thought you would have met him. But I go on asking everyone because you see I don't really know what became of him. He was reported missing after the fight at Drocourt."

"Then he may be alive after all."

"The War Office says no. They've told me that no doubt he is dead—died in such a way that there was nothing left of him that anyone could recognise. When it happens like that they report a man missing."

The man's face suddenly hardened, and his eyes became intense and fanatical.

"I am a hater of war," he said. "I don't believe it necessary. This war needn't have happened if the

statesmen had been wise in time. They weren't wise. They let things drift. Old men made the war, and the young men have paid for it with their lives. There's a poem of Kipling's you may recollect. It has this line, 'But who shall return us our children?' Kipling's own son was reported missing—he was his only son. I ask you to forgive me, gentlemen, and not to think that I don't appreciate all you've done for us. But just the same it makes me sick to hear you talking as if war were just a splendid game. It isn't. It's the murder of young men to atone for the follies of old men. And God will yet judge the murderers and punish them. At least I hope and pray that He may."

He sank back in his seat, trembling with the violence of his emotion.

One of the nurses laid her hand upon his arm.

"The old men have paid for their unwisdom," she said quietly. "They also have lost their sons. Don't you think we should forgive them?"

But he only muttered to himself the lines of Kipling's:

"They bought us anew with their blood, forbearing to blame us,
Those hours which we had not made good when the Judgment o'ercame us.
But who shall return us our children?"

The indignant flame died out of his eyes, and presently he began to speak more quietly. It seemed he was returning from France, after a fruitless search for news about his dead son. He had been permitted to visit the battlefields, to inspect the cemeteries, to wan-

der among the tens of thousands of white crosses on lonely hillsides, but he had found no trace of his son. His son had disappeared as completely as a broken bubble on the sea. And from the pilgrimage of grief he had returned with a great horror filling his mind.

"I used to read the daily casualty list like other people," he said, "but I never grasped what it meant. You know the old words of the Psalm, 'A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee.' That's how we all feel, I suppose—it won't come nigh us. There's not a man lying in those lonely graves whose mother or wife or sweetheart didn't comfort herself with the sweet lie, 'Whoever dies, he won't die.' Well, France has buried a million and a half of her men, so they tell me, and Great Britain not less than a million. Love and faith and prayer couldn't protect them. People talk now as if a new faith in God had been created by the war. I don't believe it. For millions of persons like myself the war has killed religious faith. We've prayed and found prayer vain. We shall never pray again. We feel that God has lied to us."

The words, so intensely spoken, created an uncomfortable impression. It is not the habit of English people to discuss God in railway carriages; there is a sense of outraged reticence, a kind of sacrilege, in mentioning God at all in ordinary conversation. The young lieutenants squirmed visibly at the name of God. The Red Cross nurses were flushed and embar-

rassed. Nevertheless it was one of these eager boys who found his tongue and made reply.

"O, I say, you know, that's not how we feel at all. We take our chance of being 'pipped,' and don't worry. I guess your son was like that. He didn't mind dying—it was all in the day's work, you know, Sir. And I rather think he wouldn't be quite pleased if he heard you making such a fuss about it."

"And he died for *that*," said the Red Cross nurse, who had spoken before in pity of the old men who had paid their price of their unwisdom in the sacrifice of their sons.

She pointed to the fields and pastures, the orchards and farmhouses and old churches, that streamed past the clear windows in a long frieze of immemorial beauty.

"He didn't die just because politicians were foolish and statesmen blind. He died for England. He died that these old churches should not be spoliated, and these farmhouses burned, and the women in them ravished, and the children mutilated. He died to keep all that safe. He knew that it was worth dying for and he died."

The old man did not reply, but it was evident that the words had sunk into his mind. The sullen cloud lifted from his face, and left it almost beautiful in its pathos of age and sorrow.

The train began to slacken speed. Over the fields and trees a faint mist had fallen, as if the air had thickened. Long lines of mean villas came into view, a shabby park, a street of shops—and then there

swung up against the grey sky something wonderful and vast, a curving river with terraces and palaces, the towers of Westminster, the far-off dome of St. Paul's, with its golden cross touched with dull flame. They were in London.

III

His first impression of London was of an immense lassitude, beneath which lay a perilous fire.

He had come too late for the glorious hours of public triumph. The shouting was over, the banners furled, the exultant music silenced. After the long years of tragic struggle, during which the minds of men had been held tense by supreme emotions, there was an inevitable relaxation. He could sympathise with it for it was his own experience. Those days of secure dawns and tranquil occupations, for which he had so often sighed amid the relentless exactions of military duty, now that they had come, appeared flat and profitless, colourless and insipid. He missed the fierce exultation of war. He realised that there had gone out of his life something, which, while it was a source of pain and hardship, keyed up the whole of his nature to superhuman exertion, and compensated him with hours of sublime elation. What he felt, London as a whole felt. The period of reaction had begun.

Not that the great city was not throbbing with vitality—never had the tides of life run with a more flashing motion, like waters driven by a strong wind in strong sunlight. The theatres and restaurants

were crowded. Men in uniform were everywhere. Women, who during the hard days of the war had dressed soberly and made a virtue of shabbiness, were once more gratifying their taste in finery, thereby adding to the streets, so long grim and austere, touches of colour and beauty. But beneath all this outward show of joy there was a deep substratum of sorrow. The nation was reckoning up its losses. People everywhere were conscious that they lived in a new world, that the former things had passed away forever, and that all things had become new.

For instance, what Bainbridge had said in the train about the culpability of the statesmen who had let the war take them unawares, appeared to be a general sentiment. During the actual process of the great conflict the nation had abstained from any criticism of these men, feeling that such criticism was ungenerous and unpatriotic. But this truce of silence was now ended. There was a disposition to accuse them, to expose their amiable weaknesses, to arraign them and condemn them. Some of the angrier critics even went so far as to demand their impeachment. They were servants of the public who had betrayed their trust, and it could not be accepted as a condonation of their error that they had paid for it bitterly in personal losses.

Already books and pamphlets on the war, purporting to be histories, were appearing in great numbers; and it was noticeable that their critics turned as by a common instinct to an examination of the origins of the war. Of the heroisms of the war they said little.

These were admitted. They were recorded with sober pride. But because Britain had emerged gloriously from the tremendous testing was no reason why the question should not be pressed how it had come to pass that Britain had met that test absolutely unprepared? How was it that the Haldanes and the Asquiths were totally unaware of the intentions of Germany? How was it that the court had no inkling of the gigantic conspiracy of their insane kinsman? How was it that a conspiracy which was whispered about by every German clerk in every counting-house of London, was unknown in Downing Street? How was it that German officer prisoners had been treated with extraordinary consideration? How was it that the wives of English public men had actually shown toward them an amazing friendliness? And round these latter questions all sorts of scandalous stories collected. It was said, for instance, that a certain German city was not bombed for a long time, although there were ample reasons for attacking it, because the wife of a certain statesman had financial interests in it.

Chalmers felt that this new spirit of recrimination and accusation was to be deplored, yet he realised that it had painful justification. Sooner or later it was bound to find expression. The hour had come when men and women looked around upon their desolated homes, and began to comprehend their losses. They had been sustained by a superhuman courage in the actual hour of loss. They had been willing to give all, and gave it freely, without murmur or complaint. But now the question gnawed at their hearts, why had

these things happened, and could they have been avoided? And the nation was also taking account of other kinds of losses. They had grudged nothing to carry on the war, and had poured out money like water; but now people were engaged in examining the bill. They were faced with an immense national debt, with the prospect of long years of unprecedented taxation, with an enormous pension list. However patriotic a man was, he could not be expected to accept these burdens in meek silence. And since they were unalterable, his mind inevitably asked whether after all a moderate degree of wisdom and foresight might not have diverted the calamity which had laid the whole world waste.

But beneath these movements of the public mind there lay another, more secret and more perilous.

It was difficult to define, simply because it was secret. It was a silent accumulation of imprisoned energies moving toward change—a radical change in the whole structure of society.

On his first Sunday night in London he went to a great popular Church to hear a famous preacher. The scanty audience justified the pessimism of Father Bennett. The sermon was a placid exposition of the meaning of prayer, ending with a plea for unworldliness. Men must set their hopes on things above. They must make their earthly troubles stepping stones on which to rise to a clearer vision of heaven. The overwhelming tribulation through which the nation had passed should produce a desire for this clearer assurance of the reality of things unseen. It was ad-

mirably expressed, in poetic and discriminating diction, and contained passages of real beauty. Yet it obviously made little impression on the audience, which consisted mainly of oldish women and grey-haired men, with the unmistakable aspect of habitual worshippers. They kindled once or twice at some exquisite modulation of the preacher's voice, at some perfectly adapted illustration, but for the most part they listened with nothing more than patient politeness.

As Chalmers came out he walked behind two men who looked like prosperous artisans. One was a middle-aged man with a severe face, fringed with a close-cropped grizzled beard. The other was a young man with particularly deep-set dark eyes, full of sombre fire.

"Well," said the younger man, "I've heard him, and once is enough. I never want to hear him no more."

"What's wrong with him?" said the older man.

"The same old tale," replied the younger man bitterly. "Wait till you get to heaven for what you can't get here. Be a good child, and p-raps you'll get a lollypop when you go to bed. Well, the likes of you and me has done a deal of waiting, and nothing's come of it. We ain't going to wait much longer. We want our lollypop now, and by God, we're goin' to get it."

"I thought as that bit about heaven was kind of beautiful," said his companion, rather wistfully. "There was a sort of comfort in it."

"Heaven be damned," was the retort. "That's a sucker's game. It's a confidence trick. Be quiet and

don't complain, and you'll see what I'll give you. Not for me. I'm not having any. I want my heaven now, like the rich folk who take care they get it now because they can't be sure of what they're going to get later on. And remember this, we've the power to get what we want, if we like to use it, and I'm much mistaken if we don't use it."

They passed along the broad street, talking vigorously, and turned into a narrow by-way, which led to a grey block of workmen's tenements.

The next day as he crossed Trafalgar Square he was stopped by a long procession, with bands and banners. It consisted wholly of women, most of them young. On the white banner which headed the procession there was inscribed in red letters:

WE'VE DONE OUR BIT
WE WANT TO KEEP OUR JOBS

In the evening papers he read a full description of the scene. The grievances were too real to admit dispute. For four years these women had "done their bit" with fidelity, efficiency, and often with heroism. They had been chauffeurs, conductors on busses, working in machine and munition factories; they had done the work of the men who had gone to the Front, but now the return of the men had displaced them. It was only fair that the men who came back should resume the occupations they had left; but it was manifestly unfair that these women should be discarded. The papers, in their comments, offered no solution of

the difficulty; but they all admitted the peril of the situation.

The peril was aggravated by the fact that these women workers had been earning during the war unprecedented wages. They had spent freely, with a careless hand. They had bought pianos, gramophones and costly furs; they had formed expensive habits, and few of them had laid by anything for a rainy day. Most of them had become thoroughly efficient in the occupations they undertook, and could do the work assigned to them quite as well as, and even better than, the men. In many instances their employers were willing enough to keep them, for they recognised their qualities. What was to be done with them? How were they to be re-assimilated into the social fabric? No one knew. It looked as if England was not less prepared for her problems of peace than she had been for the catastrophe of war.

IV

Again and again there recurred to his mind Father Bennett's sad conclusion that the old England had passed away, his yet sadder prognostication that it would never return.

He had grown accustomed to the thought that there was a certain cleansing and uplifting element in war. It was a baptism of fire and blood which rejuvenated the souls of men. Had not the thought been expressed by poets like Rupert Brooke, by soldiers like Donald Hankey, by a great company of writers who

saw mankind coming out of the furnace of war like fine gold refined in the fire of sorrow and sacrifice? But the more he saw of London the more he began to doubt that magnanimous reading of events. What sign was there of regeneration in a London which immediately on the signing of the armistice rushed back to the old ways of life, with a passion for pleasure only the more avid by long denial? What new voice, authentic with truth, authoritative with prophetic directness, had been raised above the general tumult to stir the souls of men?

There was President Wilson, of course; but he shared the general dubiety concerning the qualities of that enigmatic personality. It was quite upon the cards that he might prove to be the greatest man in recent history—equally on the cards that he might find his place among the dangerous and meddlesome idealists who plucked out the foundations of society without any power of replacing them with anything more solid than moonshine theories of life. About the older statesmen there was no dubiety. They had exhausted their bag of tricks long ago, and could only repeat their old legerdemain to audiences which steadily grew more and more sceptical. Lloyd George certainly had vision, but it was erratic and untrustworthy, at the mercy of political opportunism. As for the rest, the Carsons and the Balfours and the Laws, all they wanted really was to re-establish as much as they could of the ancient order. And the ancient order couldn't be recalled—it was gone root and branch.

The regeneration of war—no, it was very difficult.

to believe in it, in the light of actual facts. There could be no doubt, as Father Bennett had put it, that the general effect of war was that men and women everywhere went with a looser rein. Mankind was like a school that had broken loose in general riot and disorder. They had tasted the strong wine of freedom and were intoxicated with it. Who should recall them to the drudgeries of plain uninteresting duty? The mass of the working class population was in open revolt. They claimed their right to what they called "a better life" which did not mean a life of nobler ideals, but simply a life of better material conditions. They were not to be blamed for that. The injustices of their lot were open and notorious. They had long ago been aware that they were the producers of a wealth in which they had no fair share. They were going to get their share—there was no doubt of that—but material prosperity had never yet made a nation great and it never would.

Perhaps this reaction was after all to be expected. The wave ebbed as far as it flowed. He could not believe that the England which had risen to such splendid heights of sacrifice could long remain supine. The new leader must surely come, the strong hand that would shape her destinies to a new glory. The old England had gone, as Father Bennett had said—the England that was still feudal in spirit, with its romanticism, its traditional loyalties, its pleasant ease of life, its invincible satisfaction with its own achievements. One could not think of its passing without poignant regret. Even the American, with all his adoration of

speed, energy, hustle, would have liked to keep it as it was. While he pretended to scorn what he called its backwardness, in his heart he admired it. There was something in its stubborn placidity, in its reverence for tradition, in its slow pleasant ways of life that soothed and pleased him. While he scorned this England for not being Americanised, the last thing which he really wanted was to see her Americanised. Well, after all, there were a good many Englands that had passed away—the England of the Cavalier, the England of Fielding and Smollett, of Thackeray and Dickens, the pre-industrial England of the yeoman, the pugilist, the Corinthian, of the coach, the highwayman and the press-gang, and always a new and better England had risen from the disintegration. Surely it must be so again—whatever might be the evolution of this newer England it would not wholly contradict the past or disgrace it. Nevertheless the period of transition was difficult, and the longer he stayed in London the more there grew upon him the sense of something perilous at work beneath the surface of things.

V

He spent a good deal of his time at the club for American officers, a stately house put at their disposal by one of the great aristocrats. There he met one night an artillery Major, who before the war had been a professor at Yale. He was a tall, lean man, with prematurely white hair, and the face of a thinker. He came from an old New England family—the Cald-

wells were of Puritan ancestry, and had given a remarkable group of educators, lawyers, writers and ministers to the Commonwealth. Major Caldwell had inherited from them a notable keenness of mind, with a fugitive quality of prophetic vision, derived possibly from one of the earliest Caldwells who had been a famous denouncer of things evil in his day. Like many other men of his type, his intellectual qualities had been in abeyance during the war. He had concentrated all his energy on the sole ambition of becoming a good soldier. His life had been objective, not subjective. But with his release from the tremendous daily exigencies of the battlefield his critical faculty had re-asserted itself, and his mind was constantly engaged in a study of sociological conditions. He was a conservative by nature and training, a conservative who had been swept out of his old intellectual abiding places by a great wave of generous emotion for democratic ideals. The wave was now receding, and his original conservatism was asserting itself.

To him Chalmers confided some of his impressions of London. They were sitting at an open window and through the evening dusk there came the muffled roar of the metropolis, that deep monotonous hum, as of an enormous hive, the movement of millions of lives in incessant gyration, a sound like no other, more solemn than the sound of seas and winds, the voice of an unappeasable restlessness, of a whole universe of imprisoned energies.

"I wonder what's really going on down there?" said Chalmers.

"I wonder, too," said the Major. "Do you know, it frightens me a little?"

"Why?" said Chalmers.

"The chief reason, I suppose, is just that we don't know. One fears the unknown, the hidden, the mysterious."

The Major was silent for a moment, and then began to speak in a low voice, as if he were talking to himself, endeavouring to formulate his own half-shapeless thought.

"The day of the people's power has come, there's no doubt about that. Quite suddenly the world has been given into their hands. What are they going to do with it? Will they treat it as a costly toy to be smashed out of pure mischief? That's what the Bolsheviki have done to Russia. They've got the world into their hands, and their first instinct is to destroy it, just to show their strength. That temper is not peculiar to Russia. After all, men everywhere are much alike. If you suddenly give power to those who have never had it, they will abuse it. We've destroyed militarism, but there's this to be said for militarism—it was a bond, a cohesive force. It held people together, made them act as one, suppressed the natural anarchic tendency of the individual. It did it tyrannically, and therefore it was right to destroy it. But if you take away cohesion, the atoms of society fall apart. The method of cohesion may be bad or good, but we must have it in some form unless the *whole structure* of civilisation is to dissolve."

"We have liberty, isn't that a bond?" asked Chalmers.

"It is if you can agree upon a common interpretation of liberty, but that's just what the world has never done. Liberty, as conceived by the law-abiding Englishman, is one thing: liberty as conceived by the Russian anarchist quite another. We came to a practical interpretation of liberty while we fought for it. It was very simple—we had to crush the Hun because he was the worst foe of liberty the world had ever seen. The cohesion of common peril and common purpose drove us together. But now that these are relaxed, each nation—indeed each man—will give his own private interpretation to liberty. Here is the thing that troubles me: we've made the world safe for democracy; we have now to make democracy safe for the world. Can we do that? For believe me that is a far harder task than crushing the Hun."

Chalmers remembered the words of Father Bennett about the decay of the spirit of restraint, the conversation of the two workmen at the Church door, and the parade of women workers; and, as if to give emphasis to these memories, while Caldwell was speaking there throbbed upon the air the distant clamor of band-music and singing voices, and the dull air grew red with the reflection of torches. They were still marching, these indefatigable women, conscious of injustice, and they were singing the Marseillaise as they marched.

To have sung that in the streets of London was once almost a prison offense. He remembered his

father telling him of a visit he made to London in the winter of 1884, when men marched every Sunday through the streets carrying the red flag of anarchy, singing the Marseillaise, until there came a certain Bloody Sunday when the police rode them down in Trafalgar Square, and their banners of revolt were trampled in the mire. And now the Marseillaise was the world-anthem of liberty. It was sung by every free nation, by every nation that desired freedom; it had even been sung before the royal palace at Berlin.

The brave music had a gladness in it. It had the effect of lifting the gloom which Caldwell's words had created in his mind.

"We've organised war on a scale the world never knew," Chalmers said. "Think of Britain with her seven and a half millions of fighting men, her million and a half of sailors. No one imagined she could do it. Had anyone told her in 1914 that she could do it, she would have declared it impossible. This vast array was composed of men who are just the same men as fill her streets to-day. If she could organise war on this scale, don't you think she is equally capable of organising peace? I believe it can be done, and what is true of Britain is equally true of France, Italy, America. America particularly, for she knew less of war than any nation, and surprised all the other nations in her organisation of war. I don't believe peoples who have done these great things can fail in the new tasks which await them. There will be mistakes —God knows there have been mistakes enough in the war, but men will work out together an organised

liberty. If they fail in that they will fail in everything. But they won't fail—from my soul I believe they will succeed."

"I believe that, too," said Caldwell gravely. "All that I say is it won't be easy. We crushed militarism because in their hearts all men hated it. It is more difficult to crush anarchy, because anarchy is selfish individualism, and all men are anarchists at heart, in the degree that they are selfish. I say again, it is a much harder thing to make democracy safe for the world than the world safe for democracy."

VI

This conversation with Major Caldwell made a deep impression on his mind.

He had yet not learned to sleep well; any unusual agitation of thought disturbed the injured equilibrium of the nerves and drove sleep from him. That night his sleeplessness took the form of interminable conversations. No sooner did his eyes close than a whispering began in his brain, like the sound of secret voices in a dark room, gradually growing clearer and louder. He tried not to listen, but the voices intrigued him in spite of his will. Then it was as if some unseen hand touched a button, flashing on an electric light, and his brain was ablaze. He looked and saw veiled figures gliding out of a distant doorway, still whispering, drawn close together in intimate confidence; and then they merged into a single figure, which he recognised as Caldwell's, and he heard

him again repeating his formula that it was harder to make democracy safe for the world than the world safe for democracy.

"Confound the man," he cried, and drew the clothes around his head; but no sooner did his eyes close than that secret whispering began again. He had slept dreamlessly many times in wet trenches, in open fields, in the coffin-like hollow of a dug-out, with the guns booming like distant drums and the Very lights streaming across the dark sky. He had slept in a wood with dead men lying round him. He had slept in wet clothes, with his feet half frozen in the mud, his face uncovered to the keen starlight and the searching frost. Now he lay on soft pillows between white sheets, and he could not sleep. He had dreamed of doing this so many times; had pictured amid his discomforts and deprivations the sweetness of a restful bed, and now he found no rest in it. If he could only silence that whispering in his brain, the persecution of those secret voices!

He rose, opened the window wide and got into bed again, hoping that the fresh air would induce sleep. He closed his eyes resolutely, and dozed for a few minutes. Then the voices began again, and now they were multitudinous. The low hum of London drifting in through the open window, had mixed itself with his dreams. It was like the stirring of leaves in a dark forest, like the monotonous thudding of falling water, like the beating of a million hearts made audible. He tortured his imagination to find analogies, swiftly rejecting one after another as inadequate.

There came to him suddenly the words of a Psalm, "Thou holdest my eyes watching, I complain and my spirit is overwhelmed." "Ah," he thought, "that is what the sound is like, the noise of a people complaining, a restless multitude murmuring together—millions of mouths lamenting, millions of hearts accusing God and destiny, all the secret wrong and sorrow of human life made vocal, rising to the indifferent heavens like one vast sigh"— The women he had seen marching with their complaint of injustice, the workman with his angry repudiation of pulpit opiates, the Marseillaise with its stern accent of revolt, all blended in his mind into a diapason of complaining, the deep organ note of the human soul forever struggling to obtain something which was evermore denied. Democracy—what was it after all but the demand of men to get a chance of happiness? And Revolution, what was it but the despair of men who found the chance they hoped for, to which they believed themselves entitled, escaping them? He was broad awake now. He sat up in bed, listening to that deep hum of London which filled the air. He recognised in it a plea, a protest, an accusation—man's age-long protest against the unfairness of human life, man's eternal accusation that the world was misgoverned.

He wished himself back in the dreary misery of the trenches. He could sleep there, and he knew why—there his life had been simplified by the exigency of a single task. He was freed from the leadership of his own life, from the responsibility for its direction. He had but one thing to do, to obey orders and execute

them faithfully. He had been at peace there, in spite of the squalor, the peril, the filth, the horror and corruption. He had been like a man who had taken vows and embraced the monastic life, a life of separation from personal desires, with all its movements timed by the clock of inexorable duty. The Prior of that monastery was Death. Quite literally its brothers gathered in their shrouds like Trappist monks. Each hour they lived, they lived as those appointed to die. Yet he had been happy in that complete freedom from the perturbation of personal desires, as the monk is austerely happy in his renunciation. And now he felt much as a monk might feel who is thrust out suddenly into a forgotten world. He had to recover his lost initiative, to familiarise himself with paths long since deserted, to begin to live anew under conditions which he had discarded, as he supposed, forever. And at that thought fear came upon him. He who had known no fear in the constant contiguity of death was afraid of the exactions of life.

He was ashamed of the thought and put it from him resolutely.

"No, no," he said, "this will never do. Caldwell is right, the big task is to make democracy safe for the world. We have destroyed its great enemy, autocracy, but we have yet to arm it for its own defence. We have to show that we were right in fighting for it, because democracy alone holds the secret and the method of human happiness. It was easy to die for the world; it is harder to live for it. This is the higher heroism."

In the perils of the battlefield he had rarely prayed. He used to take it for granted that God knew all about him, and would look after him whatever happened. But now he left that deep instinct for prayer which comes to the man who knows himself faced with tasks too great for human strength. He slipped out of bed, and knelt in silence, finding no words for his desires, yet conscious that his innermost desires were being interpreted. He expected no immediate answer, and was conscious of none. But in the deep silence he realised that his soul was being filled with content and peace. It was like a silver water of tranquillity, very cool and fresh and clear, that came flooding into his soul, filling every nook and cranny, as the sea-tide seeks out the little bays and remotest inlets of the shore. He got into bed again, and slept at last with the deep sleep of a happy child. Perhaps this benediction of sleep was the real answer to his prayer.

He was awakened by a knocking at the door. The bell-boy had brought him two telegrams. One was from the Cunard Company saying that a berth had been reserved for him on the *Mauretania,* which sailed in three days' time. The other was from his uncle, saying how eagerly he was expected in America. He did not see Major Caldwell again until they met in New York some weeks later.

PART TWO

AN APOLOGUE

I ASK the pardon of my readers for interposing at this point a brief apologue.

On the third of August, 1492, a man of stubborn faith and indomitable daring set out to discover a New World. His largest ship was a decked vessel of one hundred tons; the other ships of his trivial Armada were two caravels, of fifty and forty tons. His entire party of adventurers numbered only eighty-eight. He had recruited his crews with extreme difficulty. It had been necessary to offer an indemnity to criminals and broken men to induce them to serve on the expedition. Few of them had any correct comprehension of the purpose of the voyage, and none any enthusiasm for it. They were ready to mutiny on the least occasion. The falling of a meteor into the sea was interpreted by them as a divine omen not to proceed, and the westerly variations of the magnetic compass filled them with alarm. Above this crowd of timid and apprehensive men Columbus towered like a prophet of the Lord. He alone had vision; he alone was the dreamer of a dream which he knew would come true. After seventy lonely days and nights of sailing on an uncharted sea he recognised the first signs of land, the soft fragrance of unseen forests, a flight of birds, a floating branch covered with red

berries, an iron-shod pole wrought by human hands; and, says the chronicle, "With these signs all of them breathed and were glad."

Columbus had found a New World beyond the furthest waters. It was utterly unlike the world that he had left. It was primitive, simple, social, unfettered by artificial laws, ignorant of the grinding tyranny of caste, unstained by the pollution of courts and the selfish passions of kings. Man moved freely in the natural dignity of human nature. The kindly earth was the common heritage of all. Behind him, he had left infection; here was paradisal health. From an Old World, red with blood, corrupt and dying, he had passed into a New World, which offered to the weary host of humanity a new start for a nobler pilgrimage.

From that hour a new page in the book of universal history was turned. But the Old World crossed the ocean with Columbus. What men made of their new heritage, what records they wrote on this new page, what heroism and follies, what splendid valours and disgraceful cruelties, we all know. If Columbus could indeed have left the Old World behind, the story might have been very different; but he took it with him. He took possession of the New World in the names of their Catholic Majesties of Castile and Leon, and thereby planted the seeds of all the ancient evils and corruptions in the virgin soil of Guanaliane, which he re-named San Salvador. A greater man would have cut the cable that held him to the Old World for good and all. Columbus was

not great enough for that supreme renunciation. His prophetic vision was exhausted in the hour when his feet trod the golden sands of San Salvador. He saw no longer a New World, but only a New Spain, which was a very different thing.

The quest for a New World has gone on in every generation. Men are adventurers still at heart, and are resistlessly impelled toward wider seas. They broke away from the old at the call of Savonarola, Huss and Luther; they broke yet more completely when the challenging trumpet of the French Revolution roused a sleeping world. The fearful irony of human history is that men persist in taking their old worlds with them when they discover new worlds. They dare not cut the cable that binds them to the past. Their moral force is not equal to their intellectual vision. They win their new world, and, having won it, do not know what to do with it. For the want of this diviner knowledge they mishandle the new heritages they have won with blood and carnage, and in the end men find they have but exchanged papal infallibility for the crushing pedantry of Calvin, and the effete tyranny of the Bourbon for the vigorous tyranny of Bonaparte. The world broke with its past, in 1914. On that memorable August night when the entire British Fleet vanished in the mists of the North Sea, the world set sail upon a new adventure, far more momentous than the voyage of Columbus. It was headed for the Unknown. After long and perilous voyaging it found its New World. Let us applaud the great adventure, with its tale of deathless heroism

and enduring glory. But the larger matter is what will the human race make of its destiny? Will it have the supreme daring to cut the cable which holds it to the past? Is its ultimate vision a New World or a New Spain, the old tyrannies reproduced under new names or a fresh beginning for the human race, untrammelled by past traditions, uninfected by the old corruptions? Do we take possession of our New World as men capable of creating a new order of society, or simply as a predatory host in the name of the sacred majesties of Castile and Leon?

A New World is worth nothing to men who have not a new spirit. For the larger purposes of human progress we may as well have remained in our Spain, if we carry our Spain with us, and can signalise the end of our adventure in no better way than to rename Guanaliane San Salvador. If this is all Columbus can achieve at the end of his heroic voyage, it had been better for us all had he never left the palaces of Granada. He would have missed his human immortality, the praise of history and the sumptuous tomb in the Cathedral of Seville, but how much would the world have been spared of piracy and bloodshed, of fatal lusts and crushing cruelties, the spoliation of fruitful lands, the massacres of simple races, and the tortures of the Inquisition conducted in the name of God and with the ingenuity of devils?

CHAPTER IV

THE VOYAGE

I

I DO not assert that this apologue was in the mind of Chalmers as he turned his face westward, but it may be taken as symbolic of his state of mind. He had a sense of sailing into the Future. His spirits rose as the immensity of ocean scenery met his view. Even the Titanic business of war sank into insignificance before this immensity of sea and sky, the boundlessness of these plains of ocean, the grandeur of these Alpine cloud masses, vaster than all material mountains, the capricious Himalayas of the sea.

From a boy he had had the faculty of losing the weight and torture of personality when confronted with the immensity of Nature. In the silence of woods, but oftener under the span of starry skies, he had felt a poignant sense of the insignificance of man and of all human affairs. The perturbations of personal ambition seemed such little things compared with the persistent flow of elemental forces, the secular rage of life that throbbed through all the atoms of the globe, the planetary rush and urge of worlds toward unknown goals. He knew very well that it was not

a healthy condition of thought; it reduced all human effort to absurdity, and he had often sought to overcome it. But there were times when it came as a great relief to the exhausting experiences of the spirit, and this was such a time. On the first night at sea he walked the deck long after midnight, watching the stars as they dipped beneath the long black line of the horizon, until he felt as though they were bright chariots, which carried into oblivion his own anxieties and griefs. He slept with the soft sea-air blowing on his face, and woke with a sense of health which he had not known for many months. All that he had suffered and endured appeared a dream from which he had awakened—something that had happened to someone else, which he faintly recognised as himself.

His interest in the human drama came back with a rush as he walked the deck in the fresh morning light. His mind went back to the last time he had crossed the Atlantic, the stealthy glide of the ship like a ghost over grey waters, the ever present sense of peril, the fugitive hunted haste and the flying terror, like a deer fleeing for her life, dogged by invisible pursuers. There was a touch of madness in it all, a sense of the monstrous and incredible to which the mind could not reconcile itself. He could fancy the great vessel herself hag-ridden, haunted, whispering to herself in every creaking timber secret messages of fear. But to-day, as she ploughed through the rolling waters, it was as though she sang for joy, conscious of her own release from terror. She moved *with* a majestic fearlessness; her brasses gleamed like

gold, her masts rose proud and challenging against the sky, her screw flailed the waters into miniature Niagaras of sparkling foam. And the passengers had the same air of freedom and elation. Their eyes were bright, their lips smiling, they were like school-children on a holiday.

The New World, how alluring the prospect—But the Old World was travelling with them.

It was the Old World that sat beside him at the breakfast table in the person of a gross middle-aged man with greying hair and small greedy eyes. He bore the name of Bulstrode, and somehow the very name suggested grossness. He ate dish after dish of rich food with piggish eagerness, at the end of which unedifying performance he wiped his mouth vigorously and remarked, "Well, I feel the better for that."

He appeared to be waiting to be congratulated on the fact. When Chalmers said nothing, he made an effort at conversation by remarking that the ship was very full, much too full for comfort. He explained that he'd had great difficulty in securing a cabin to himself, and seemed to think himself affronted by the reluctance of the Company to meet his wishes.

"However, I got it," he went on. "I paid for the two berths, and I'm pretty comfortable."

Chalmers remembered his own crowded cabin. He shared it with three soldiers, one of whom had been gassed and slept badly, another with a useless arm, which made dressing a humiliation to him. And Mr. Bulstrode had a two-berth cabin to himself, merely for the sake of indulging himself in pompous solitude.

He felt no inclination to talk with the man, but Bulstrode was the sort of man who was perfectly willing to talk without any expectation of reply. He took it for granted that the universe was interested in all his doings. He was satisfied that he was the kind of person in whom the universe ought to be interested. And the creature actually had views and opinions which he thought important, particularly views upon the war. He was critical of Foch's military genius, and not at all well-pleased with Haig and Pershing. Above all he thought that the war ought not to have ended yet awhile. And presently he blurted out his reason—"It's been a good little war for me. I've cleaned up a million dollars out of it."

So that was what he was, thought Chalmers, a profiteer. While millions of men had given their lives, this fat spider had sat in his web, sucking their blood and weaving their substance into threads of gold. His gorge rose at the man, and a red wave of anger rushed across his brain.

"So it was to save beasts like you that my comrades died, was it?" he cried. "To give you the power to use two berth cabins while men who are maimed are crowded in anyhow! I wish to God I had you alone in a front-line trench with a Mills' bomb in my hand —I'd rid the earth of your filthy, bloated carcase. And you call yourself a man and an American!"

Bulstrode turned pale before the fury of this attack, but his assurance did not leave him.

"I'm as good an American as you are," he retorted. "I've done my duty, and if I've made money at the

same time, who's to blame me? I've no doubt you wish you'd done the same."

"O, go to hell!" said Chalmers. "You make me tired."

He left him to digest the insult and went on deck. Later in the day, in the smoking-room, he learned something of the man's history. He was a coffin-contractor.

"A what?" he asked his informant.

"Belongs to a Casket Trust, so it's said. In the beginning of the war America sent over thousands of wooden coffins to bury the dead in. It was some kind of graft probably. Anyway, they weren't wanted. They got used as sentry boxes, I heard. But Bulstrode made money out of it, and out of other things, too. I've no doubt he is sorry the war's over. It's been the biggest chance of making money he's ever had or will have."

"I guess we'll get some of his money out of him before we've done with him," said another man.

"How do you propose to do that?"

"Just take it. Plain highway robbery, if you like."

There was a general laugh.

"Well, I don't exactly mean that, of course. But we've got to pay for the war, haven't we? The way I'd pay for it is very simple. I'd collect up everybody who's become rich by the war, and take everything they've made by it. Add to these those who've always had too much money, and take what's necessary. If we did that, we'd pay for the whole war easily enough."

"Ah, here is the New World," thought Chalmers—"Bolshevism, or whatever they call it. Make the rich pay. They've no right to be rich, anyway. Take what you want from those who've got the most. Certainly the plan has the merit of simplicity."

The curious thing was that the plan really did seem to be approved by the men in the smoking-room. They were the usual kind of men one finds in such a place, except that a third were soldiers. They were no doubt quiet, law-abiding citizens. Yet they viewed with serene approval a scheme for the spoliation of the rich. The rich must pay for the war—that was an accepted principle. Bulstrode and his kind must pay. No man must be permitted to be a penny richer by the war. If he'd made money by the war, he'd want another war; and if there were men enough who expected to make money by war, they'd do their best to create wars.

This was the line of argument pursued by all the speakers. The man who had introduced the subject laid particular stress upon the danger to world peace from men whose interests were all in the direction of war.

"Bulstrode's a type," he insisted. "He's not troubled by ideals, but he has a business man's perfectly natural appetite for success. He doesn't want to kill anybody, and is too fat to be blood-thirsty. He does want to make money. The war gave him his opportunity, and he's profited by it. It's just the same way with the Krupps, but of course upon a larger scale. They wanted war because they stood to make

millions by it. The only way I can see to stop war is to make it unprofitable. Men like Bulstrode must be made to see that war doesn't pay. And the best way to drive that very wholesome truth into his thick head is to take from him all the money he's made by war. He'll never want another war after that, you may depend."

The unfortunate Bulstrode found only one defender. A quiet, elderly man, with the supercilious eye-brows of a college pedant, who smiled ironically as the discussion went on, and at last took part in it with the remark that spoliation was a dangerous weapon which usually recoiled on those who used it.

"It's like an old blunderbuss my grandfather had," he said. "It was a tremendous affair, with a great bell mouth, pretty nearly as heavy as a field gun. My grandfather thought he heard a burglar one night, and got down the old blunderbuss, and went out to shoot him. He shot him all right, he ripped off a bit of the man's ear. But the blamed thing kicked, and broke his own jaw. The burglar recovered sooner than my grandfather."

"That's all very well for a story, but——" interrupted the advocate of spoliation.

"Pardon me, I didn't tell it for the sake of the story, but for its moral. I don't in the least object to shooting burglars, especially if they've got the swag with them. But look out for the recoil. When you start robbing robbers you are very apt to go on to robbing honest men. It becomes a habit. Look at Russia. The Russians began by robbing the men who

deserved to be robbed; but the habit grew on them, and to-day the robbers are all robbing one another. So far as I can understand their temper their one idea of social justice is that no one ought to possess anything, for possession is in itself a crime. But possession is after all the symbol of a man's decency. To have something that is really his own, a house, a bit of land, a little money in the bank, is the basis of self-respect. When you take those things from him, you kill his self-respect, and equip him as a criminal. He will begin to rob because he has been robbed, and the end of that kind of thing is anarchy."

The discussion might have gone on endlessly, but at that instant Bulstrode entered the smoking-room. He was received in dead silence. He was tacitly treated by all of them as a man beyond the pale. He had not only made money by the war, but wanted the war to go on that he might make more money. For that inhuman cupidity there was no forgiveness.

Chalmers felt the man's presence so repugnant that he was glad to get out of the room into the fresh sea-air. He felt a need of lustration; he drank in great draughts of clean air as one who wished to rid himself of a secret contamination. One by one all the others came out on deck, leaving Bulstrode to the inexplicable silence of the smoking-room. Even he must have shrank before the mysterious ostracism, and in his dull mind wondered what he'd done to deserve it.

"And yet he's probably neither better nor worse than the Old World he represents," thought Chalmers.

"It's quite true—he's a type. His offence seems monstrous because we see it against the scarlet background of suffering and heroism. But is it any more monstrous than shooting down strikers to make oil dividends—doing all the things unscrupulous wealth has done for generations—and not been blamed for either —their crime condoned by its success, the men themselves finally accepted as philanthropists, adulated by the press, defended and even praised by the pulpit.

The Old World, is it really dead? And can there be a New World while it survives?

II

From these sociological themes, his mind was suddenly diverted by a personal interest that was to have a remarkable effect upon his life.

He had insulted Bulstrode so grossly at breakfast that it was perfectly natural that he should seek another table for his gastronomic performances. Chalmers noted his disappearance with satisfaction; and, looking round the dining-room, saw him in a distant corner, in full evening dress with diamonds in his shirt-front, much too large for decency, of the kind affected by sporting men and bar-tenders. A large Jewish woman with a small sallow husband sat beside him, and Chalmers could almost hear them whispering together about Bulstrode's diamonds, wondering if they were real and what they were worth. He smiled ironically at the picture he now conjured up

in his mind, and said "Of such is the Kingdom of Mammon."

What he was quite unaware of was that life was preparing a surprise for him, out of the accident of his indignation against Bulstrode, in the sardonic way that life has of using insignificant incidents to bring about quite significant results. The chair at the table which Bulstrode had vacated—it was the one next his own—was presently filled by a charming little person, with an exquisitely fair skin, fair hair, and an enchanting freshness of appearance. She was dressed in piquant black, which made a perfect setting for her fairness, and wore no ornament of any kind. Her name was Claire Gunnison.

She did not talk much, but she had the rare art to make her silence an interpretation of her personality. Charm is something that is independent of either speech or silence; it is an evocation and an atmosphere. Chalmers felt its presence, as one conscious of a faint magnetic current. He gathered from her that she had been in Paris during the latter part of the war. Her black dress suggested sorrow, but in its quiet elegance it also suggested sorrow as lightly worn. Her eyes were more vivacious than her speech. They were of an unusual grey, which deepened into blue; they reminded him of the Channel sea. Her hands were particularly beautiful, longer than is usual, with delicately tapering fingers, of a shell-like pink at the tips. To Chalmers, hungry for women, as all soldiers are hungry after the long monastic discipline of camp and trenches, she was an alluring apparition. The only

women he had seen for many months had been hospital nurses, preoccupied in their profession, in whom sex was subdued. Claire Gunnison was Nature's unrestrained expression of sex. The soft contours of her face, the delicate grace of her body, the tendrils of golden hair that clustered at the back of her neck, the rise and fall of her bodice as she breathed, the perfume of her clothes—all these were the subtle weapons of sex, and all were so very different from the austere khaki-clad women and the starched immaculate virginity of hospital nurses he had known, that the allurement fell on him with novel force. Yet there was about her a certain firmness, a quality of definiteness, which separated her from the women whose beauty is their sole possession. He knew instinctively that she was more than a lovely woman; she was a woman who had thought for herself, and attained a fixed philosophy of life.

He did not discover that philosophy at once. He drew her deck-chair against his after dinner, and together they watched the moon rise out of the dusky sea, and talked of places known to both of them. Friendships formed at sea are proverbially rapid, and by the next day he was on intimate terms with her. She told him about her girlhood in an ancient English village, where church bells had called the hours since the days of Norman knights, whose benefactions built the church. She told him of the restlessness of spirit engendered by too much rest, the gradual revolt against the serene deadness of rural beatitudes. She had been engaged to be married at the

beginning of the war, and her lover had fallen in the battle of the Marne. Chalmers remembered the name of Major Choate; it had been associated with a notorious divorce case. And here she struck her first note of modernity, for she spoke of the dead man with admiration, and did not resent his infidelity.

"Why should I?" she said quietly. "He had the right to please himself. If he had lived, he would have heard no word of blame from me."

Before the war began she had reacted from the stupid dullness of the conventional woman's life into the fierce activity of the militant suffragette. She had adored Mrs. Pankhurst, but blamed her for not recognising the full conclusions of her own logic. She claimed freedom for women, but that freedom must be absolute if it was not to be worthless.

"To fight simply for a vote, what a ridiculous ambition!" she exclaimed. "Most of us fought for far more than that. We intended to be free to arrange our lives as we pleased, to be like men not only by voting but by acting with the freedom of men in all matters that concern ourselves."

And she made no pretence of disguising what this freedom meant. It found the conventional view of marriage utterly repugnant. It was an artificial bond. It was ridiculous when one considered the subtle changes in personality which are wrought by years, and often by single swift events. Men had tried to enforce a law on women to hold them in captivity, women had done the same by men, and neither had succeeded. The war had given freedom to both.

Neither was going to put the old yoke on the neck again.

"The wise people who have conducted the war," she said with an ironical smile, "think that the sole effect of the war is to free nations from political servitude. They've built better than they knew, they've freed men and women from every kind of servitude, servitude to convention, servitude to opinion, servitude to Puritan narrowness—all that kind of thing. Do you understand?"

Chalmers found it very difficult to understand. After all, the roots of his own life lay in Puritan morality. There had been a tradition of austerity in his family. There were times when he had resented it, and had suspected that there was something wrong and false in it. But he knew that the fruit was good; he had often told himself that its restraint was good for him. It was good for him especially because there was so much hot blood in his veins, so much of the poet, so fierce a desire to seize upon the joy of life with both hands, and drink the draught to its dregs.

Something of this he told her, for confidence begets confidence, and it was a long time since he had talked with a woman whose mind was sympathetic to him.

"I sometimes think," he said, half-jestingly, "that I am a Puritan by tradition but a Greek by spirit. I've read somewhere that the essence of the Greek spirit was the wisdom of getting joy out of the common day. The Greek turned his face away from the long perspectives which ended in sombre shadows. I suppose you would say that the folly of the Puri-

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tan was that he did just the opposite—he fixed his gaze on the long sombre perspectives and missed the joy of the common day."

"I was brought up much in the same way," she answered. "I suppose most of us were. We couldn't take short views of life. We couldn't enjoy a sunny day because we were sure it would rain to-morrow."

"Well, the war has cured me of that particular form of folly. You're bound to take short views of life when you reckon life by hours and not by years," he replied.

"I wonder whether you are really cured, or only think you are, my friend."

"I'm cured of the habit of foreboding. I know that. I don't look forward as I once did. I've grown so used to having only the present that I don't think about the future as mine at all."

"Ah, that's only a negative deliverance. The positive deliverance is not in ridding oneself of the future, but in really possessing the present."

The phrase sank into his mind, creating a good many eddies of thought. What did she mean by it exactly? Was this part of the heritage of the war that the bondage of men to the future was broken; that human creatures had so thoroughly learned the insecurity of happiness that they would henceforth seize on any available happiness with a new avidity, and be deterred by no remote threat of consequences? He knew very well that this was the spirit of many men he had known. They were good comrades, they had proved themselves true heroes, but they had

thought themselves justified in snatching eagerly at any pleasure that offered, even when it implied a complete repudiation of the morals in which they had been bred. They probably did not reason much about the matter; if they had they would have said that a man about to die in the fullness of his unwasted youth was justified in getting what he could out of life before death took all from him. God was kind and would understand. He would not deal harshly with the man whose pleasure was so brief, whose sacrifice of pleasure was so imminent and final.

He could understand that attitude in the soldier. But it was a new thing to find this attitude in a woman like Claire Gunnison. She was so sweet and dainty and desirable; she was so inherently modest in spite of the boldness of her opinions; she uttered them with such innocence that he wondered if she could really comprehend all their implications.

He spent all his time with her now. Through the long sunny days he sat beside her, never tiring of her talk. Night by night they watched the rising moon, the silvered plains of ocean, the immutable pageant of the sky. He found in her a quality of attraction which he had found in no other woman. Did he not think of Mary Challoner? Often, and at times with compunction. He found himself able to find a place for both in the hospitality of his affections. He was a little shocked at the discovery. Had he been challenged, he would have said with truth that his heart was given to Mary Challoner. He had no intention of dethroning her; but in Claire Gunnison he found

a woman so different in every quality that she appealed to him in a new way, for which he was unprepared. She was a woman created by the war; he was a man created by the war—was this the real bond between them?

They had been discussing a book one morning which both had read. It was in the main a violent attack on marriage. He imagined she would agree with it, but to his surprise she expressed a strong dislike for it.

"Marriage is necessary and right," she said, "for most women. They can fulfil their lives in no other way. They are willing to accept the bondage for the sake of homes and children and respectability. But they are not the only women. There are others who are too proud and too humble to marry."

"Isn't that a contradiction in terms?" asked Chalmers.

"Not if you understand what I mean. They're too proud to buy homes by servitude, and they're too humble to ask from men a great price for what they have to give. They don't bargain. They do really give."

"And you, Claire?"

"I give," she said in a low voice.

The last night at sea came all to quickly. They sat together once more on deck, already conscious of a landward breeze, which presaged the hour of separation.

She laid her hand on his, and looked up into his face with gleaming eyes.

"Will you let me give?" she said.

"No, dear, I cannot."

"The Puritan not yet quite vanquished?" she said, with a faint smile.

"I suppose so."

He felt himself flushing. He had not blushed since he was a boy. He felt ashamed as a boy is ashamed of anything that impugns his masculinity.

"Well, I shall say God bless you, dear, just the same. I shall always be glad because I met you. If you should ever need me——"

Her voice broke, she put her arm round his neck and drew his face to her.

"Kiss me, please," she said.

It was so they parted.

III

He slept little that night.

There was a furious heat in his blood that kept him wakeful, the long repressed passion of sex which overmastered him. His mind was full of thoughts of Claire Gunnison. The tones of her voice, the fragrance of her hair, the warm pressure of her lips on his maddened him. Not far from him, in her white cabin, she slept or made a pretence of sleep and he imagined her as she lay there, with her golden hair unloosed, and her bare arms stretched out in invitation. He knew that she was thinking of him, that she was subtly drawing him to her, that he had but to walk a dozen yards and be with her. He could see the look

with which she would welcome him, the grey-blue eyes startled and glad, the beautiful hands that would draw his head down to her warm bosom. All that delight was his for the taking. It was offered him without scruple and without condition. Every fibre of his flesh cried out for her, and he had refused her.

And the ferment of his blood was equalled by the ferment of his thought.

Like all men, whose thoughts are normally pure, he had had his dream of just such an adventure as this. Puritan as he was by birthright and training, he had yielded to the emotion of such dreams, though he had always shaken himself free from them by an effort of the will and had been ashamed to recollect them. He had pictured the adventure happening to him in just such a way as it had happened, in a ship or on a train, the sudden apparition of beauty, the dissolution of moral barriers, the flowing together of lives with a Greek carelessness of consequence. And he knew so many men to whom such adventures had actually happened, men not inferior to himself in all soldierly qualities, who had felt themselves released from the ordinary conventions by the peril and sacrifice of their lives. They had boldly taken the brief bliss which life offered them, justifying themselves by the insecurity of all bliss, and the precariousness of life. Were they wise or foolish in their tacit assumption that the imminence of death freed them from ordinary restraints, and that God would be charitable to their weakness?

And women had come to think in the same way—

he knew that. There had been developed in them an extraordinary tenderness toward the fighting man which had over-ruled their moral scruples. They could deny nothing to the man who walked before them with the sacred fillets of sacrifice bound round his brow; he had not even to ask for that which they were eager to give. They recognised no evil in their acts: they were acts of magnanimity. In Paris and London, on the great routes of travel between the two capitals, in the hotels and even in the houses of the wealthy, these women were to be found, many of them engaged in some form of patriotic service. They had no relation whatever to the ordinary courtesan, who follows in the trail of armies. They were usually women of taste, often of education and refinement. But they were women who had broken away from the old restraints, counting them negligible under the stress of new emotions; women obsessed by the idea of limitless magnanimity, who, as Claire Gunnison put it, did not bargain but gave.

The quality of Claire Gunnison which had most impressed him was her essential modesty. It confused and confounded all his ideas of right and wrong to find such a quality in her, but it was undoubted. Her negation of morals was not the fruit of passion; it was the result of a deliberate intellectual process. She had reasoned out the whole question of woman's emancipation for herself, and had pushed it to its logical conclusion. She saw that conclusion as the complete possession of herself, and this implied the right to deal with herself in her own way, to give or

withhold herself as her own taste and discrimination should decide. The thought of any wrong done to herself, or any degradation of her sex by the act she contemplated was a conception of things which had not entered her mind. She spoke and thought like an innocent pagan, to whom common conventional ideas of right and wrong were unintelligible. And by the simplicity with which she stated her position, the sincerity of her nature, she made these common rules of life appear stupid and absurd.

O how sweet and desirable she appeared to this sleepless man, haunted by her image! How easy to go to her, how difficult to keep away! He balanced the shame he would feel in going to her against the shame he had felt in refusing her, and the scale dipped now on one side, now on the other. The austere Puritan moralities in which he had been bred would condemn him if he went; her distressed eyes filled him with a more vital shame for staying away.

Those who have never known such hours cannot comprehend them. Those who have known not only no deviation from the narrow path, but no desire of deviation, will not understand how fair and desirable appears the flowery land seen above the hedge of convention to one who has always walked with his eyes turned down on the hard road of duty. Still less will such immaculate persons understand how the long strain of dying daily on a battlefield, when suddenly removed, brings general moral relaxation; how man reacts from his own brief nobleness, so that the greater the height of nobleness to which he has attained the

more liable is he to descend to a corresponding depth of ignobility.

Through the mind of Chalmers, there passed like a strain of music certain lines of Shelley's, which he had learned long ago when he was sixteen. He had not so much as recollected them since those days of dawning adolescence. They rose suddenly now from the depths of his mind, as though they had waited, silent, all these years for such an hour as this.

I arise from dreams of thee
In the first sweet sleep of night,
When the winds are breathing low
And the stars are shining bright;
I arise from dreams of thee,
And a spirit in my feet
Hath led me—who knows how,
To thy chamber window, sweet.

They made an intolerable appeal to his senses. They were like an enervating perfume blowing through his soul. He rose from his bed, turned up the light, and stood hesitating with his hand upon the door. He opened it and looked out into the dimly lighted corridor. The frail spirit of Shelley, tenuous as moonlight, seemed to beckon him. Why did he not go? He could not have said. But he did not go. Another spirit, the spirit of inherited morality, of old and sacred associations, put shackles on his feet.

"No, no," he cried. "I cannot do it."

He could not, and that was all he knew about it. There was some inexpugnable quality in his nature which could not be overcome.

He went back to his berth, and put out the light. An hour later, as he still lay sleepless, another thought

struck his mind like a blow. He had fought for a New World; if he failed of knightly purity he would have fought in vain. No New World could be built on license. The spirit in a soldier's feet must not lead him to the bower of pleasure, but to those roads of sacrifice which he had already learned to tread in pain, and self-denial, and discomfort. By no other paths could the New World be found, by no other spirit could it be established.

IV

He saw her next morning for a few minutes just before they left the ship. She stood upon the upper deck, watching the unfolding panorama of New York, her cheeks flushed with the sea-breeze, her hair sparkling in the sunlight like spun gold. She met his gaze with perfect frankness. It was he who was timid and embarrassed.

There was a sort of gentle pity in her attitude to him, a solicitude that was akin to motherliness. She was pained by his embarrassment, and sought to put him at his ease. She spoke in level tones of the beauty of the harbour, the cyclopean walls of the amazing city that rise in confused magnificence out of the encircling waters, the sense of strangeness and vastness which the whole scene created. At last he grew bold, and lifted his eyes to hers. Her face held no record of the emotions she had felt and created in him. Only the least trembling of the lips, the slightest flutter of

the eye-lids above the grey-blue eyes, betrayed the fact that these emotions were not dead.

For a brief moment he was madly insistent to revive them. If he could see those eyes look in his as they had done the night before, if but for a moment they might meet his in the divine abandonment of love! He felt like one who lets an inestimable treasure slip through his fingers, because he has not the strength to close them. They were parting, prosaically and publicly, with idle words about the aspects of New York. At least he owed her gratitude for her offered gift; if there must not be the strained embrace and the final kiss there must be one brief heartfelt word of gratitude.

She read his thought, and gently shook her head. She understood him, and knew that she would profit little by a love yielded reluctantly. She made allowance for his embarrassment, comprehending that it was moral in its ultimate quality. The ordinary woman would have hardened her heart with pride, because her mind would dwell upon the cruelty of his refusal. But Claire Gunnison was of a different order; because her nature was large she could not stoop to petty pride.

"O, Claire," he began with stammering lips. But she stopped him at once, with a hand softly laid on his.

"Do not speak," she said. "I know what you would say. Let it be unsaid. One thing only let me repeat. If you should ever need me, you will find me your true friend."

"Where shall I find you?" he whispered.

She gave him a card with an address on East Sixty-seventh Street.

"I am visiting some relatives, and shall be there for the winter."

She paused, her difficult fortitude shaken for a moment, and then added in a low voice, "Life has a trick of arranging things for us in ways we don't suspect, hasn't it? Perhaps life may throw us together again some day. Who can tell? If it should, it will always be a gladness for me to meet you."

It was his dismissal.

He held her hand firmly for an instant and turned away.

A few minutes later the great ship turned to her dock like a homing bird to its nest, and in the crowd upon the docks he lost sight of Claire Gunnison.

CHAPTER V

MARY CHALLONER

I

THE white house, with its clear windows, in its beautiful setting of summer woods, appeared to be just as he had left it four years before. He saw it from the train five minutes before he arrived, for it was conspicuous. It was long and low, with a plain façade, a roof of green tiles, broken by dormer windows, its walls built of glittering stucco, subdued by the growth of rambler roses, which splashed its hard surface with crimson. The roses had climbed a little higher in these four years. They had reached the window of the room he used to occupy. It was as though the crimson of war had broken in a brief wave upon the immaculate whiteness of the walls and left them stained.

At the little station a long line of automobiles was drawn up. He could distinguish his uncle's by its chocolate colouring, picked out with golden lines. To the returned adventurer it is always an astonishment to find things exactly as he left them. He expects, irrationally enough, no doubt, that because he is changed the world must needs be changed; he cannot

understand a world that is static. Men go away, suffer and endure great things, and, returning, find the wheels of normal life moving with the old precision, in the old grooves. The same automobiles ranged in the same order, the same city men escaping from the club-car—it was enough to make him rub his eyes and wonder if he had ever really been away.

Chalmers stepped from the train with the rest, and, looking down the long narrow platform, saw his uncle approaching him with outstretched hands. Hugh Challoner was a handsome man—it was a tradition among the Challoners that all the men were distinguished by distinctness of feature and fine carriage, and all the women by beauty. No Challoner had ever married an ugly or a plain woman, and so the tradition of physical grace had been preserved through four generations. There was a French strain in the blood, which perhaps accounted for this physical distinction. Hugh Challoner, at a fancy dress ball, dressed in Louis XV costume, would have perfectly looked the part.

Years and the nature of his occupation had a little dulled the fine lines of his distinction. He was a stock-broker with ambitions to become a money magnate. Days spent in the fierce perturbations and anxieties of the Exchange had left their mark on him; they had given to his aquiline features a certain predatory aspect. Chalmers swiftly noticed that his features were sharpened, that his moustache was whiter, and that he looked much older. Nevertheless his air

of youthful gaiety persisted, and his greeting of Chalmers was almost boyish in its eagerness.

"So you've come back, John. Thank God, for that. And I can't say you look a penny-piece the worse," he cried. "We're mighty glad to see you, for there was a time when we wondered if we'd ever see you again."

They entered the motor, which swiftly swung down the remembered curve of the white road and began to climb the hill through little groves of fir. It passed between the tall stucco pillars of the grounds, and drew up on the terrace of the house. The terrace, bathed in the afternoon sunshine, was swept by a soft warm breeze, fragrant with roses and resinous pine. The eyes of Chalmers sought the door of the house which stood open, revealing the cool marble-floored hall, with its oriental rugs, its long Italian table and its vases of cut flowers. It was in that doorway that Mary Challoner had kissed him when he went away. He had always pictured her standing there to welcome him on his return. He looked now, with interrogation in his eyes, at the empty doorway.

"No, Mary's not at home," his uncle said with a laugh. "The fact is she had a bridge party arranged for this afternoon before we knew you were coming. You know how it is—it doesn't do to fall out of that sort of thing, it spoils the game for the others, so she went. She will be back to dinner at seven."

"So bridge goes on as usual, does it?" said Chalmers.

"Of course. Why not? The war's over, isn't it,

and we're all getting back to normal as fast as we can. And Mary plays the best hand of any of the girls round here, I believe; and is therefore in great demand."

"Of course," he answered. "I perfectly understand."

But in his heart he did not understand. He was conscious of disappointment and resentment. Of course, he reflected, in a little settlement like Melrose, social engagements counted for a great deal, but it did seem stupid that they should be made as exigent as this. He had come home after years of contest with death, and Mary was not there to meet him—she was playing bridge—that was the brutal fact on which his mind fixed.

He took his bath, made his simple preparations for dinner, and sat at the open window, enjoying the breeze that had the first evening freshness of the hills in it. It was a beautiful world, he thought, and something must be forgiven those who dwelt in this exquisite remoteness from the thronged life of men. How should they understand the tragic seriousness of that world where he had dwelt? How comprehend that such a man as he was set immense value on such a little thing as being met with instant welcome in the house to which he had returned—that he had had dreams of such a moment and imagined it a hundred times in that barbaric desolation of the trenches? A queer world, too, where people rushed back to trivial games the moment a tremendous war was over, as if their sole desire was to forget! But perhaps he was unjust, he thought, unjust to Mary. Perhaps it was

an instinct of maiden modesty, a girlish shyness, that counselled her not to greet him in the moment of his return at the door where they had parted. She desired some less public place and hour. She was afraid to exhibit her emotion on that open stage. Yes, that must be the reason, and because he was eager to find excuses for her, he accepted it without too rigid an examination. His spirits rose, and he whistled gaily as he brushed his hair. It was half-past six, and in half an hour he would meet her.

He went downstairs and found his uncle in the library. It was a beautiful room, long and lofty, built as a kind of annex to the house. Glass-doored bookcases lined the walls; above them were antique busts, not reproductions, but genuine specimens of ancient bronzes and sculpture. Along the middle of the room were specimen cases, containing good examples of ivory carvings, small bronzes, coins and a few exquisite Tanagra figures. At the far end of the room was an open space covered with rich rugs, three or four deep leather chairs, and a remarkable fireplace and overmantel of carved stone, purchased from a dismantled Italian palace in Siena. For Hugh Challoner, like most of his race, had a genuine love of art and an instinctive discrimination in its pursuit. Forty years before, when he left college, he had wandered widely over Europe, familiarising himself with all the great galleries of art, and it was his pride to point out in the west angle of his room a small window composed of rare painted glass which he had brought home in fragments from one of his earliest tours. He had

purchased it for a trifle in a remote French town, but it may be doubted if anything which he had bought had given him such real pride and pleasure, for it was his first acquisition, and was not bought through agents, as most of his later collection had been, but on his own judgment.

At that time it was still an open question what path in life he would choose. He was strongly inclined toward a college professorship, for which he was fitted by his literary and artistic tastes. But on his return to the States the immense industrial and financial development of America, then at its beginning, attracted him and finally captured his ambition. He recognised the value of wealth, the more so because the fortunes of his family had declined. At first he told himself that he would content himself with making a modest fortune, and then retire to a studious leisure. But as he began to succeed in life his definition of what constituted a moderate fortune was continually re-defined. The age of the millionaire was passing, and was succeeded by the age of the multi-millionaire. To amass enough for moderate luxury no longer contented him; and so he was gradually drawn into that energetic pursuit of wealth for its own sake which was typical of the new era of American expansion. The dream of studious leisure grew faint in his mind, although it never wholly faded. He still promised himself some day the bliss of retirement to his books and art treasures.

This house which he had built was the symbol of this hope, the library particularly so. He had built

it at the suggestion of his wife, who had died in it ten years ago. She had loved the silence and the beauty of the hills and had hated the clamor and confusion of cities. Built at first as a summer home to please her, it had become his only real home. When, at her desire, he had sold the sombre brownstone house on Sixty-seventh Street to which his fortunes had conducted him, for a time it seemed as if his dream of studious leisure was coming true. With what delight he had built this library, planning every detail himself! As he arranged his books, his costly first editions and manuscripts, his bronzes and his ivories, he recaptured much of his first fresh joy in art. He was happier than he had ever been since those days of student touring in Europe, when every road he trod was arched with the rainbow of romance. And with what joy he had seen his wife's nature expand, like a flower that had at last found its right soil, in this quiet and beautiful environment. She seemed to grow younger every day as she rode along the green hills, or worked in her garden; her beauty, a little worn and dulled by the years of the city, came back to her in a new girlish freshness of colour and cheerful spirits. Often before the log fire in the library they had sat together on stormy nights, feeling themselves drawn closer by the beating of the rain upon the window, and they had meditated their happiness. And then there had come that black day when she died. A neglected cold, a few hours of acute agony, and then, with her hand in his, she had closed her eyes like a tired child, and fallen asleep forever. From that

hour the world of mammon had drawn him back to its soul-stifling embrace. He found the only opiate for memory in action, in an incessant prodigal expenditure of energy for objects which he did not value, but which nevertheless were the only objects that allured him.

One promise his wife had extracted from him just before she died, that Mary should never live in cities. Emily Challoner had discovered in the peace of country life so true a happiness that she was determined that her daughter should not be robbed of it. What Emily Challoner did not foresee was that these lonely hills of Melrose would be covered in a few years with the houses of the rich, that they would become a small pagan Capua where ease produced selfishness, and brought in its train all the evil tendencies of fatigued pleasure constantly in quest of new sensation, which she had supposed the peculiar characteristic of the city.

II

In his evening dress, fresh shaved and smiling, Hugh Challoner looked much more of a leisured gentleman than a New York stockbroker. Anyone who had seen him in these surroundings alone would have had no difficulty in believing that his earliest ideal had been a cultured and intellectual life. Only an acute observer would have recognised in the deeply lined face and the haggard eyes, under which pouches had begun to form, indications of a life that was driven by stronger passions than the pursuit of knowledge.

But to-night he looked younger than his years because he was happy. He was genuinely glad to welcome back John Chalmers. Chalmers's father had married his only sister. She had died young and her husband had soon followed her, so that the boy had become in an unusually intimate degree the ward of his uncle. Hugh Challoner, not knowing quite what to do with him, had allowed him when his college career at Yale closed to spend a year in private study and travel, while he found out what career he would wish to follow. Then came the war, and John Chalmers had been among the first to enlist. He had not asked his uncle's permission; he had gone direct to Ottawa and obtained the promise of a commission in the Field Artillery, at the close of a six months' training at Kingston. At first his uncle was seriously offended, but after all he admired John's spirit, and soon became proud of it. He wore a single star service ribbon in his coat with ostentation, and made a boast of his nephew's heroism.

"He didn't wait for his own country," he used to say, "he felt the thing so deeply that he went at once. He's a true Challoner."

As the war went on his pride in his nephew grew. He was not wholly unaware of the relations that existed between the cousins. He suspected that they were a little more than cousinly. Well, where could Mary find a better husband, a man more gallant, or with a better record? Yet at the back of his mind lingered a certain doubt, like a small dark cloud on the horizon of a summer sky. John Chalmers had an inde-

pendence of character which made it difficult to predicate his actions. He had enlisted without any consultation with his uncle, and although the thing had turned out admirably, it indicated a disconcerting quality of initiative. Of course there could be no question of marriage between the cousins unless John had some secure means of making a livelihood.

Hugh Challoner had thought over that situation a good deal, and it was in his thoughts now as he stood in the quiet library, waiting for his nephew. He would have to talk to John about it, not immediately, of course, but as soon as a fitting opportunity occurred. He was prepared to act generously. The most practicable thing seemed to be a position in his own firm, which would lead to a partnership in due course. That would be an ideal arrangement, and straightway his mind was obsessed by a sudden delightful vision of John and Mary married, living in the house at Melrose, and himself gradually withdrawing from business to realise that long postponed dream of cultured leisure among his books. If the frail and lovely ghost of Emily Challoner still haunted the library which both he and she had loved, and could discover by some magic of the spirit the movement of his thoughts, he was quite sure she would approve such a programme.

But here the little dark cloud on the edges of his mind became larger. How did he know that his nephew would care to enter the firm? He might have quite different ideals of life—as different as his own had been in those remembered youthful days when he

had coveted a college professorship as the most satisfying of careers. And how did he know that there was anything between the cousins but cousinly regard? Mary had given no hint—at least to him—of the things that went on in her heart. If her mother had lived, no doubt the girl would have confided in her, but that kind of confidence was rarely given to a father. He remembered, with sudden confusion, that after all he knew very little of her real character. He was away all day in the city, often absent for many days on long journeys connected with his investments; he was a transient guest in his own house rather than a resident. She sat before him at the breakfast table in her fresh morning dress; she swam into the room each evening in her diaphanous dinner gown; but of all the small acts and pursuits which made her daily life he had but the faintest surmise. She rode, of course, and visited among her friends, and played tennis or bridge, and enjoyed social popularity. During the war she had substituted Red Cross work for bridge, as everyone had done, but the new employment had revealed no new quality in her character. He began to suspect that he knew as little of her real character as he did of his nephew's—both moved in worlds unrealised by him.

"Well, well," he thought, "I must not be hasty. I must wait upon events. The only thing that is certain to happen is the unexpected."

III

The entrance of Chalmers into the room broke the thread of these meditations.

He wore his uniform, the smartly cut tunic of the British Artillery officer, with its Sam Brown belt, its buttons shining like gold, the riding breeches lined with white buckskin at the inner bend of the knees, and long highly-polished brown boots. Challoner gave him a glance of proud approval. There could be no doubt that he looked a fine figure of a man, tall, graceful, erect, well-poised, with his dark handsome face and close-cropped well-shaped head.

"I'm glad you've not changed your uniform. I thought perhaps you would," said Challoner.

"I couldn't," said Chalmers with a smile. "I've nothing else to wear at present, and I've had no time to get civilian togs."

"Those are not the clothes you wore when you were wounded, eh?"

"O, dear no. They were torn to rags, and vilely dirty. They disappeared in the hospital—were probably burned—it's all they were fit for. This is a new uniform I had made in Bond Street on my last leave before I was pipped."

"I wonder you didn't keep them, just for reminiscence."

"I couldn't. Besides they had become too foul for anyone to keep. During the last offensive I didn't have my boots off for three weeks, and, of course,

I slept in my clothes. You can imagine what they were like."

"I'm afraid I can't."

"Well, picture the ragged scarecrow you put in the cornfields—we looked something like that. A decent tramp wouldn't have exchanged clothes with most of us. Try sleeping in a muddy ditch for a month, and having no water to wash with in the morning. We did that for three weeks on end, and somehow didn't mind it at all. It was all part of the game and jolly good fun."

"Tell me about it, John? I'm afraid I've no real picture of war, in spite of all the newspapers have told us."

"The newspapers! Why, what do they know? I suppose you refer to the letters of war-correspondents. Well, they're good enough in their way, some of them quite excellent pieces of descriptive writing. But the war-correspondent rarely gets nearer than two or three miles from the actual fighting. He came as near as he could, but the best he could do was to pick up incidents from the men, and weave them into a story. It was a very good little story, but it wasn't war. It was war reduced to rhetoric, not war in its filthy abomination, its damned reality of blood and ghastly wounds and putrid flesh. It was no more like the real thing than this new tunic, fresh from a Bond Street tailor, is like the bloody rags, rotten and verminous, that they cut from my body when they took me to the hospital."

"And you've been through all that, my dear boy."

"Of course, and, as I said, didn't mind it at all. I suppose decency—the decency of a well-washed body and clean clothes—is after all an artificial thing. It's not really essential. It's external to a man's real life. And the soldier soon learns to despise externals. He is dealing with essential things, courage, duty, devotion to one's comrades—all that sort of thing. What's the use of grousing because you can't get water to wash your face with when you know that in the next ten minutes you may be dead? That's how I used to feel. And to tell the truth, I feel in that way still."

"But you don't despise decency, really——"

"No, I'm glad enough to be clean again, and there's nothing on earth that seems to have a finer music in it than the sound of pure water running into a white bath-tub. But what I mean, uncle, is this: all this elaborate comfort of America, this desire to surround oneself with things that produce physical pleasure, seems to me just a little contemptible. I don't quite know how I am ever going to fit into it again."

"Well, I guess that will come in time. In a day or two, when you're rested, that's a subject I want to talk about with you. No, no, not now, of course. At present my mind is full of one thing only—the gladness of getting you back alive and well. And that reminds me you must be hungry and its already past the hour for dinner."

He pushed the button of the electric bell, and a discreet butler entered.

"Rawlinson, isn't it time dinner was served?"

"It is, sir. But we didn't know whether you wanted

it served before Miss Mary came. I understood she was to return at seven, sir."

"Of course, you're perfectly right. We'll wait a little longer. You can bring the cocktails in here, Rawlinson."

"Mary has many virtues, but I'm afraid she doesn't possess the virtue of punctuality," said her father. "And when she is with her friends the Smithsons, she is apt to forget time."

"Who are they?" said Chalmers, "I don't seem to remember anyone of that name."

"New people, my boy. Not quite our kind, I admit, but very decent folk and quite rich. Smithson bought the Milford place in the second year of the war—you remember the Milfords. It was a big, roomy house; rather ugly and pretentious, I always thought it, but the Smithsons have built on to it and made the old house over, so that now it's a sort of palace.. They've got a vast room like a hotel foyer, with an organ in it, and a marble swimming tank, and a ball-room, if you please. The war has made Smithson rich—munitions and that sort of thing, you know."

"What does Mary find to attract her in such people?" said Chalmers, with a jealous pang.

"Well, the fact is they're very hospitable, very. They like to gather all the young people of the district round them—the place not only looks like a public building but it's used as one. The Red Cross used to meet there three times a week, and so they all got into the habit of meeting there. As soon as Smith-

son knows you are home, he'll want to meet you. I shouldn't wonder if he'll get up some sort of reception and want you to speak at it."

"I'm not a speaker, uncle. I hope Smithson will do nothing of the kind."

"Well, I rather think Mary would be pleased if you did it. She's so proud of you. You must remember that you're a little bit of a celebrity to the Melrose folk, and it's quite natural that Mary should wish to shine in your borrowed glory."

"I've seen too many men lose everything by the war —health, limbs, life—that I've not much desire to meet people who've made money by the war, uncle. Such people appear to me indecent."

"O, come now, you must get out of that way of thinking," said Challoner, with a touch of hardness in his voice. "If it comes to that I've made money myself. I happened to buy Bethlehem Steel shares when they were as low as 60, and I sold out for over 500. You'll hardly blame me for that, I hope. It might have happened quite the other way. I might have lost money as easily as made it—indeed a great many of my holdings did suffer serious depreciation. And as for Smithson, I suppose he saw his chance and took it, as any shrewd man of business would, and who's to blame him?"

Chalmers made no reply. He did not wish to offend his uncle, especially in this hour of glad return. But at the back of his mind rose the repulsive figure of Bulstrode, whose apology for making money by the war was after all not essentially different from his

uncle's. He had treated Bulstrode with indignant contempt, and had visited upon him the punishment of cruel ostracism. Was Smithson any better? And how could Challoner avoid the same category? Of course, Challoner was a very different man from Bulstrode. He was a gentleman, a man of physical distinction and high social ideals, a man of intellect and culture; yet he had done, without the least idea of anything blameworthy in his conduct, much the same kind of thing as Bulstrode. Was there something in the pursuit of wealth that was inherently hostile to fine ideals? Did the desire for money corrupt inevitably the finest natures? Or was man after all so essentially a creature of a dual nature, that he could keep his nobilities and ignobilities apart, locked in separate water-tight compartments? It looked like it, and he reflected, with a sense of the inexplicable irony of life, that perhaps the persecuted Bulstrode was also in his own circle a very hospitable man, who loved to gather young folk around him as Smithson did, and make his house the hospice of their pleasure.

The library clock struck eight. Again Challoner touched the electric bell, and the soft-footed Rawlinson appeared.

"We won't wait any longer, Charles," said Challoner. "Tell them to serve dinner."

He was evidently vexed at the absence of Mary.

The two men entered the plain oak-panelled room, with its softly-shaded lights, its display of exquisitely white napery and gleam of cut glass.

There is a kind of sacrament in a shared meal.

When men break bread together they draw closer together in spirit. The slight tension which had developed between Chalmers and his uncle disappeared under the stimulus of warm food and good wine. But at the back of the thoughts of each was the irritation of Mary's absence. Her empty chair faced Chalmers on the other side of the table. This was not at all the kind of meal that he had pictured to himself in those long lonely hours of discomfort in the trenches and of watching at observation posts. In his imaginings he had scarcely visualised his uncle; but he had always seen Mary, with her face flushed with happiness, talking gaily, with sympathetic interest, and occasionally rewarding him with a shy glance of tender feeling—a Desdemona listening with charmed ears to her adventurous Othello.

The telephone rang in the hall. Challoner left the table to receive the message.

He returned a few minutes later with an air of unconcealed vexation.

"Mary is staying to dinner with the Smithsons," he said curtly. "It's very thoughtless of her. And I'm sorry. She won't be in before ten o'clock."

"In that case," said Chalmers quietly, "I think I will go to bed early. I'm very tired, and you know I am still medically ranked as a convalescent."

"I'm very sorry, my boy. I'm afraid you're disappointed."

Chalmers made no reply. The meal progressed in silence for some minutes; then, gradually he and his

uncle drifted into small talk about family affairs, in which neither of them was really interested.

At half-past nine Chalmers went to his room, and his uncle made no effort to detain him.

IV

In the quiet of his room he gave way to an agitation of thought which he had restrained and concealed in the presence of his uncle. He had so long pictured this evening and in such very different colours. He could not imagine himself acting as Mary had done, and he could not comprehend the motives of her action. His fond theory that she had postponed her meeting with him through an access of modesty was no longer tenable. If she had really loved him she would have been eager to meet him. And even if she had found herself entangled in a foolish social engagement, from which escape was difficult, there was no excuse for staying to dinner with the Smithsons.

Men did not act in that way, he told himself. And yet, when he came to think of it, he could recollect instances to the contrary. He remembered, with a growing wave of humiliation and self-pity, that even in his friendship with men, he had often found himself giving more than he received. He had had the experience more than once of postponing all his engagements to meet a friend, who never came; who went off somewhere else, caught in the casual wave of pleasure-seeking, and lightly excused his defection on the ground of forgetfulness. He began to draw a self-

pitying picture of himself as a man who for some obscure reason could not command fidelity in love. Was there some fatal deficiency in himself, some lack of attraction, perhaps some fundamental repulsion, which made him unacceptable? Was it his curious and ironic destiny always to give more love than he received? Was Mary, after all, in her frivolous disregard of him, obeying some obscure natural law, indefinable indeed to both of them, but possessed of a secret authority and compulsion?

And then, as he proceeded in this self-torturing inquisition, he told himself that most probably he was quite mistaken in his estimate of that parting embrace years before, when he left for the war. He had really built all his future on a kiss, and what folly it seemed. Of course, in such a moment of overwrought emotion, a woman's heart ruled her. No doubt Mary had a haunting vision as she kissed him of the perils to which he went, the wounds, the maiming, perchance death itself. Was it because she believed he would never come back that she allowed herself the poignant intensity of that embrace? Was the kiss like a kiss given to the dead, sacramental, the seal of eternal separation, unrestrained because there was no peril of misunderstanding, the brief effluence of an emotion which was never meant to be repeated? If that was her meaning, here at least was a reasonable explanation of her conduct. No wonder she felt awkward and embarrassed at the thought of meeting him, postponed the difficult hour, dreaded it perhaps, and would have avoided it altogether if she could.

Yet all the while, as he indulged himself in these bitter thoughts, he was listening eagerly for her return. He had opened the windows wide, and from time to time went to them, looking out on that remembered grouping of soft-rounded hills, plumed with little coppices of fir, over which the moon sailed in slow majesty, reticent and indifferent. His ear caught every sound in the quiet business of that night world, the distant barking of a dog, the rustle of leaves, the slow movement of cattle in the pastures, the intimate chatter of the little brook that hurried through the valley. The stillness was so great that he could hear the falling of the over-blown roses round the window, as the soft fingers of the night breeze moved among them. He had switched off the electric-light, the better to discover that beloved landscape. When she came he would see her, but she would not see him. Perhaps when he saw her, her face would reveal the real nature of her thoughts.

At length he heard the distant purr of an automobile moving swiftly on the leafy roads. He could see its lights twinkling like a double star; it entered the driveway, and stopped beneath the porch. He could see her white dress, and he heard her cheerful voice. Did she look up at the window where he stood concealed? He thought she did. But the whole scene was momentary. The automobile glided away, with the sharp resonance of a closed door. He heard Challoner's voice, a little gruff and vexed, and her reply, "I'm sorry to be late, father." Then the light was extinguished in the porch, and the interrupted

silence of the night flowed back, and settled down again.

"Ah, it was impossible," he told himself, "to mistake the sincerity of that girlish voice, the joyous freshness of its accents."

How churlish he had been to grudge her an evening's happiness, or to think mean thoughts about her!

V

He met her at breakfast next morning.

His first impression was that she had travelled a long stage toward self-possessed womanhood since they had parted. He remembered her as quiet and shy, moving silently about the house like one absorbed in her own thoughts, speaking little, but conveying the impression of a watchful intelligence carefully weighing and estimating the opinions of others. He had always thought this quietness of hers an adorable distinction. It suited her beauty, the pure oval of her face, her dark eyes and candid brow, her mass of brown hair simply coiled above the slender whiteness of her neck, the innocent and inquiring aspect of a young girl to whom the nature of life was mysterious. That was the face he had carried in his thoughts. It had appealed to him by a quality of remoteness, the kind of look which the great painters of the Renaissance had immortalised in their madonnas, the look of the woman who ponders unspeakable things in her heart.

It was with a sudden shock of surprise that he no-

ticed that this look was quite gone. The essential outlines of her beauty were unchanged, but the aspect was different. It was as though a landscape which had been last seen bathed in misty morning light now appeared in sharp outline under the harsh blaze of noon. She was no longer one who pondered things in her heart, to whom the meaning of life was secret; she had unlocked the secret. That cloudy look of meditation in the dark eyes had vanished; they were alert and sparkling. She moved across the room with the poise of social grace, with complete self-possession, and laid a cool slim hand in his, and spoke in measured kindness. Only in a slow flush was there any sign that she recollected the former hopes and adorations of her inexperience.

She welcomed him, of course, and went on to speak in gentle deprecation of her absence in the hour of his arrival.

"If I had known you were coming last night, of course I should have been here," she said, "but we only got your wire in the afternoon, and then it was too late. And there's the most dreadful delay in getting telegrams through, isn't there, father?"

Challoner nodded.

"The effect of Government ownership, my dear."

"Ah, I really mustn't let father discuss that question," she said gaily, "or he'll never stop. Government ownership is his pet aversion."

"It's the aversion of every sensible man, who knows perfectly well that it means the worst kind of confusion and inefficiency."

"There, he *is* going to discuss it," she retorted, "and you mustn't encourage him, John. Besides, the war's over, isn't it? And we want to forget the war, don't we?"

The lightness of her tone hurt him.

"Forget the war," he said, "I'm not sure that America has ever remembered it."

"Why, how can you say that?" she retorted.

"I mean that America's got off cheaply. She has not paid the price that France and Great Britain have paid. Therefore, she can't remember in the way that they remember."

"John's quite right," said Challoner. "We have got off cheaply. But just the same it's a good thing to come back to normal life again as soon as we can."

"Of course. That's what I meant. Mr. Smithson was saying the same thing last night. And, by the bye, John, Mr. Smithson is very proud of what you have done, and he's most anxious to hear you speak about it. He will very likely come over to-day and try to arrange for you to speak at his house. I hope you'll do it."

"Do you wish it, Mary?"

"Why, I should be proud and delighted, you may be sure."

These were the first words she had spoken which had the note of personal feeling in them. "Proud and delighted"—they rang in his mind like a chime of bells. This was surely the language Desdemona must have used to Othello. Hope began to stir in his heart. His sense of alteration in her was diminished.

After breakfast they strolled into the garden. It was a perfect June morning, fresh and fragrant. The summer heat had not yet come, only the first warmth which called out the life of all growing things. The rose-garden, which Emily Challoner had planted and nurtured with so much care, was at its best. It occupied the level summit of a ridge, from which the entire valley could be seen like an aviator's map, with its white winding road, its lanes leading to snug farmhouses, its gleaming brook, its clustered elms and willows in the pasture-land, and, bounding all, the wide circle of the hills.

"How beautiful it looks!" exclaimed Chalmers.

"Yes, I suppose it is beautiful," she said with a shrug of her shoulders. "But a little tiresome, don't you think?"

"Tiresome? I don't think I could ever find it tiresome. It makes me feel that I should be content to live and die here."

"You'd die, all right," she said. "You'd die of having nothing to do."

"But I thought you loved the place, Mary. I always think of you as being so happy here that I can't picture you living anywhere else."

"O, I love it, or I suppose I do," she said. "But you may grow tired of even things and persons you love, if you see nothing else. One loves a place most which is only seen at intervals."

"You said persons, too. I don't think you meant that."

"Indeed I did. The same face at the end of the

table every day for years and years must grow terribly boresome."

"Not if you love it."

"Yes, even if you love it, even if it's beautiful. It grows stale, and you long to see something different, if it's only to compare them. When you know everything there is to know about a landscape, every shape and colour, or in a person every line and wrinkle, and all the little tricks of speech and manner, you feel like shrieking—because you can't lose them."

She laughed as she spoke, but there was a note of bitterness in her gaiety.

"I don't think I could ever feel like that," he said.

"No? But then you've had adventures, haven't you? I haven't. Won't you tell me about them?"

He began to speak to her of his first experiences in France, but her eyes wandered.

"I don't think I can make you understand," he said.

"Am I so very unintelligent?" she said with a mocking smile.

"I didn't mean that," he replied. "What I meant was that only those can realise what war is who have seen it."

"I'm sure I've read enough about it, and I've heard it discussed often enough. No one has talked of anything else for ever so long. I suppose that's why I want to forget it."

"Then why ask me to speak of it?"

"I don't want you to speak of it, unless you want to do so. I thought you would like to tell me about it, and that's why I asked you. But, to be quite

truthful, I should much prefer that you should forget it, too. I should think you would be more eager than I to forget it."

"Yet you want me to speak of it publicly at the Smithsons'."

"O, that's quite another thing. Every one who comes back makes a speech about what he's gone through. It's expected of him. It gives him social prestige, you know."

"Good God, Mary, you can't really want me to capitalise my experiences to gain social prestige."

"Why not? It must be very pleasant to be popular, and just now the man in khaki is a very popular person. I hope you're not going to be silly about it: we are all proud of you, and the Smithsons are really expecting great things from you."

The words were spoken with so sincere an air of girlish vanity and innocence, that he could not be angry with her. It was something that she was proud of him, even if it was only social pride she felt. It was a poor crumb from a table which he had expected to be laden with the fruits of love, but it was better than nothing.

"You will speak at the Smithsons', won't you?" she said, laying her hand on his arm. "Just to please me."

"Very well," he answered, with a rather grim smile. "But, if I do, I shall tell them the blunt truth of what war is like."

"O, they won't mind that. They really like horrors," was the reply.

He looked at her with a kind of wistful surprise.

Was she saying things that were the genuine expression of her own mind, or only echoing the opinions of others? He became keenly conscious of a kind of corrupted sweetness in her. He had imagined her grave and earnest in temper: he found her trivial. Was it the result of living among trivial people? In this quiet nook of the world had she fed on the lilies and lain on the roses of life so long, that she had become enervated? He had never thought of himself as a hero, but he had always thought of Mary as heroic. He had included her in the new conception of heroic womanhood which the war had created. It struck him hard to find her so different from his ideal of her. With a lover's casuistry he blamed not her, but her environment. She had been caught in the social mesh of a set of selfish small-minded rich folk; they had corrupted her. He had forgotten that such persons existed. He had never thought of the effect they might have on a sensitive girl, shut off from the world, and dependent on them for her opinions, her ideals, her modes of thought. She turned eagerly to the view of the valley, visible from the boundary wall of the rose garden. In the distance a tiny cloud of dust rose, and the honk of an automobile was heard.

"Why that must be Mr. Smithson coming over to see you," she cried. "He will be so delighted that you've promised to speak in his house. It will be quite an event."

VI

That Smithson was not Challoner's "kind of folk" was evident at a glance. He was a short alert man, too stout for his height, with the bustling air of a bagman. His face was not bad; the dark eyes were intelligent, the large-lipped mouth humorous, and the features were blunt and heavy. One could find a thousand such faces in a casual walk through the main streets of any American manufacturing city.

He had a jovial manner; smiled constantly, laughed often, and produced the impression of a man very much in love with his own luck. He had good reason for his self-satisfaction. At the beginning of the war he was an automobile manufacturer on the smallest possible scale. He was quick to see his chance, and by dint of push and energy had obtained large government contracts for motor-trucks. From that hour his financial rise had been rapid. He had been acute enough to recognise the coming famine in shipping, and had invested all the money he had made or could borrow in buying up any kind of steamer that was not wholly past repair. A single voyage more than paid the original cost of these discards of the sea. The second year of the war found him wealthy, and it was then that he bought the Milford house, and proceeded to transform it, according to his own naïve ideas of grandeur. He was essentially a good-natured man, and had a sincere desire to share his good luck with others. He gave freely and generously to every patriotic enterprise. To make Milford Towers—he

himself had added the Towers to the original title—an open house for the community was a real gratification both to his social pride and his generous instincts.

His wife was a large-framed motherly woman of small mentality but amiable temper. She was aware of her social defects, and studiously sought to remedy them; but upon the whole they did not trouble her much, nor were they remembered against her, because they were nullified by her genuine kindness of nature. She dressed with elaborate richness, and was totally unacquainted with the art of expensive simplicity, which is the final triumph of good taste. Her solecisms of speech often created laughter, but it was not spiteful or derisive laughter. Ill-natured persons soon discovered that irony was wasted on her, and was not welcomed by those who appreciated her kind-heartedness. The fastidious might have called her vulgar, but even these were aware that what they meant by the term was an absence of social finish, not an inherent defect of character. After all, kindness of heart is a better passport to social consideration than social grace and has more enduring qualities.

The automobile swung round the curve of the driveway. Smithson descended briskly, and came down the paved path to the rose-garden with extended hand.

"So glad to see you, Mary. I've been rather afraid you might be blaming me for keeping you to dinner last night."

"Not at all," she replied.

"And this is Captain Chalmers? Won't you please introduce me?"

He shook Chalmers' hand with genial heartiness, remarking that he was proud to make his acquaintance.

"We've all heard of you," he said, "and admired you. And we want to hear you speak. I daresay Mary has told you."

"I'm no speaker, Mr. Smithson. I've never spoken in public in my life."

"Ah, but this is different, isn't it? You've something to say now, and I've found that when a man has a real story to tell, he can't fail to speak excellently. I know by myself. I couldn't make a speech on any public question to save my life, but if I have to speak on something I know better than any one else, I'm as bold as a lion."

"Well, I do know something about the war, I admit," said Chalmers with a smile.

"No one more so," said Smithson enthusiastically. "Why you went over before America declared war, didn't you? That's a real distinction, isn't it? I am one of those who always thought America ought to have declared war immediately on the sinking of the *Lusitania*. We missed our big chance as a nation by our delay. Our only consolation is that some of you took it, and didn't wait."

This opinion of Smithson's so thoroughly coincided with his own that Chalmers felt his heart warm toward him. He was therefore unpleasantly surprised when Smithson added, "But America won the war after all, so perhaps it didn't matter."

"America won the war? O no, Mr. Smithson, you're quite mistaken there, I assure you."

"But she did, didn't she? All the papers say so. I thought that was generally understood."

"It's only true in a very limited sense. To any man who takes a large view it isn't true at all."

"Of course I'm willing to be instructed," said Smithson, "but I'm surprised at what you say. I hope you won't say anything like that when you speak in my house. I'm afraid you'll offend your audience."

"I shall speak the truth, and if the truth differs from what your audience believes, I can't help that."

"Well, what is the truth? As I said, I'm quite willing to be instructed."

Thereupon Chalmers spoke.

"I am an American," he said, "so don't think I am capable of disparaging America. No armies have fought with finer devotion than our American boys. They are the equals of the best. But they didn't win the war. They came too late for that. They helped turn the scale beyond doubt. That was a great thing to do. But if you will look at the casualty lists of the last three months of fighting, you can easily discover who bore the brunt of the struggle. For week after week the British casualties ran at thirty to forty thousand. I'm not saying that the American troops wouldn't have fought quite as well, but they weren't there in sufficient numbers. They held one end of a long line, and held it splendidly. They did great things in the Argonne. But do you know that up to the very end of the war hardly an American aeroplane was in the air? They weren't ready. The American aviators flew in French and British ma-

chines. Sometimes they had refitted them with American engines, but that was all. The fact is—and it's a splendid fact—that America had laid her plans for a long war. She had built railways right across France to supply her troops with food and munitions. She had organised with tremendous efficiency for at least four years of war. Obviously it follows that when the war ended suddenly, she had not put forth her strength. It was there, but it wasn't mobilised. Therefore it's nonsense to say that America won the war. She helped immensely by her wealth and her unsuspected military efficiency, and the effect these things had in destroying the morale of Germany. She helped to the utmost of her opportunity in actual fighting. Isn't it enough to say that, without parading all the streets with placards 'The Yanks did it'?"

"Why, John Chalmers, you amaze me," interrupted Mary. "One might think you weren't an American."

"I should be a very poor American, Mary, if I didn't do justice to my comrades in arms. I don't suppose you know it, for the world generally doesn't know it yet, but the Canadians were the hammer-head of all the great final attacks. They were always put into the place of the greatest danger. They used to be called 'Foch's Pets.' But I've never heard them boast that Canada won the war. For four years and a half they fought from Ypres to Drocourt, but I never heard them boast about it. It's this spirit of boasting I dislike. It's petty. It's parochial. It isn't worthy of America. It's just because I am an

American that I hate to hear any American talk boastingly of his own doings, in tacit disparagement of those who fought much longer than he, and against far more terrible odds."

"Well, well," said Smithson doubtfully, "I suppose you're right. But do you think it wise to say these things in public just now?"

"Why not? They will have to be said when history is written. You can't hide facts."

"But just now—well, Captain, there's a good deal of anti-British feeling."

"There always has been—in America, but not on the battlefield, Mr. Smithson. I believe it is really the work of German propaganda."

"So now you're going to call us pro-Germans," said Mary with a scornful smile.

"I said nothing so ridiculous, Mary. Of course you're not. But I'll tell you one thing I've noticed—America has spent all her praise on the French, and has had precious little to say about the British. I suppose it's the old stupid rancour at work, created by false history and political enmity. But I think it's also more than that, it's the carefully disguised effort of the Hun to drive a wedge between Britain and America, because he knows that any real union between them means the end of his own military and commercial ambitions."

"But Germany's done for," said Smithson.

"Don't you believe it. I hate the Germans, and loathe them more than I hate them, but I'm not fool enough to deny their cleverness. They've lost the

war, but they're astute enough to see that they may win the peace, if only they can sow discord between Britain and America, because they know that these are their real enemies. They're not at all concerned when Americans cheer frantically for France, and talk of their debt to France; but every time an American audience cheers Britain they're alarmed, and therefore they are willing to stoop to any lie to keep Britain and America apart."

"By God, I believe that's true," said Smithson, "though I confess I never saw it in that light before."

"The more you think it over, the truer I think you'll find it. From the first, with some honourable exceptions, the attitude of the papers toward Britain has been lukewarm if not hostile. At one time the lie went round that the British armies left the French to do the hardest part of the fighting. When that lie was killed by the immense casualty lists of the British, the ground was taken that America fought to save France, but not to help Britain. To the very end of the war Britain was spoken of as an 'associate,' never as an ally. And then comes all the mischievous nonsense about the freedom of the seas, which was interpreted by the mass of people as an American effort to limit the British navy. Mr. Smithson, I used to read the American papers when I was in the trenches. All round me men were dying under the Union Jack. They were daily doing acts of supreme devotion and heroism. And then I read the sneers of American papers about Britain not doing her part, sneers from men who forgot that their own country waited two

years and a half before she did anything at all, and I was ashamed. And that's why I resolved that if I did ever happen to survive and come home, I'd at least make it my business to let my own people know what the British had done in the war. I don't ask for magnanimity, I don't appeal to it. I ask for nothing more than an honest recognition of facts. The fact that there are 700,000 British dead in France and Flanders. The fact that for two years and a half the British Navy was defending America as well as England. The fact that the British and American soldiers thoroughly understand each other, and respect each other's virtues, and cannot understand the petty spirit of armchair politicians who lose no chance to create division and envy between the only two nations who have the power, by their union, to create a just and happy world."

"Listen to him," said Mary, with an enigmatic smile. "He said he couldn't speak, and he's addressing us as if we were a public meeting."

"I'm afraid I am, and I apologise."

"No need to apologise," said Smithson. "You've very much interested me. And I believe you're right too. It's for me to apologise for telling you what I thought you ought to say in public. You just say anything you like, Captain. I guess we can bear it."

They turned toward the house, and the talk drifted into personal channels. It was arranged that Chalmers should speak in the ball-room of Milford Towers in two days' time.

"My secretary can let all the people know over the

'phone," said Smithson. "We'll have a little dinner party before the speech. And I'd be glad if you'll come early, Captain, I should like you to see my house."

"And we might have a dance afterwards, don't you think?" said Mary. "That would make it a delightful evening."

"Why, certainly, if you want it, Mary."

Chalmers looked at her in surprise, but he said nothing. Did she see nothing incongruous in wedging in his speech between a dinner and a dance? And again there came to him that impression of a corrupted sweetness in her. It seemed to him that her very voice had altered since those old days of simple girlhood. It had been a voice of low sweet harmonies, suggesting the perfume of flowers and the quietness of gardens. It was a pure and earnest voice, rarely heard, like the nightingale's. It was like secret music rising out of deep stillness; it had vibrations in it which stirred the heart with the knowledge of beauty, the conviction of a hidden loveliness in earthly things. It seemed now to have lost these qualities. The depth and beauty were lost, the moving quality of tone: it was shallow and insincere; it had taken on the thin artificial accents of society, and had become common. She was a priestess who had left her temple, a vestal who had forsaken her temple and its sacred fires. She no longer moved aloof and separate; she had lost the distinction of her isolation. In that changed voice was the witness of her deterioration, the

proof of the subtle ruin which the world and its vanities had wrought within her.

VII

Those of us who heard the speech of Chalmers in the Smithsons' ball-room will always retain a curious impression of something elemental suddenly loosed, with shattering effect, upon the placidities of the conventional. It was like a volcanic wave thrown up from the abysses of the Pacific, mud-coloured, immense, rolling like an advancing wall across the blue plains of water, submerging everything in its path, and then quietly sinking again in a stained and agitated sea. This image, no doubt, appears too grandiose for the occasion; but nevertheless it does convey a truthful impression.

The singular thing about the effect which Chalmers produced was that it owed nothing to what usually passes for oratory. There was no use of calculated antithesis, of startling metaphor, of dramatic gesture; nothing in the way of purple patches. He spoke very simply in conversational tones. After the first brief moments of nervousness he appeared to forget all about his audience. He spoke out of himself, and, in a sense, to himself. This is what I mean by a certain elemental force in him; his soul talked. Thoughts and emotions long rehearsed in secret, long meditated in the privacy of his own heart, took shape, and poured themselves out like molten metal from a cauldron. Simple as his words were, they were intense. He

stood, a tall slim figure, burdened with a message like a prophet, and quietly aware of its value, before that crowd of well-dressed people. I don't know what they expected—probably a dramatic story in which humour and pathos were nicely balanced; selected episodes from a grim drama, in which the grimness was modified and attenuated to the polite traditions of a drawing-room. What they heard was a plain man's description of what war meant. "Do any of you really understand what war is?" was his opening question. He repeated it again and again as he went on, as a motif is repeated in grand opera. He was there to make them understand.

A man of more ordinary mould, setting out to achieve the same end, would no doubt have found his chief means in the vivid portrayal of physical horror. Chalmers certainly did not ignore physical horror. When he spoke of the unburied dead on the Somme perpetually churned up in the mud under the wheels of advancing artillery; when he pictured the walls of the trenches built up of corrupting bodies, German, French, and British, each still recognisable by his rotting uniform; when he described an exploding shell leaving only fragments of flesh of those who but an instant before had been men full of laughter and the love of life, he could not but be conscious of the shudder that ran through his audience. But the horror created was of a more subtle quality than the physical. It was the horror of spiritual nakedness. It was the horror of seeing souls stripped of their bodies, a monstrous divine indecency. It was like looking on

God, a profanation and a sacrilege. It was the innermost secrets of being suddenly exposed. And its effect was to make one ashamed of the body, the grossness of its appetites, the luxuries with which civilisation had surrounded it. It was so negligible a part of the human creature, so easily broken, so quickly cast away and made valueless. It was at best nothing more than the blood-stained uniform of the spirit. The uniform was torn away, and that which lay beneath it was pitilessly exhibited, in its grandeur or its deformity. In such scenes spiritual values alone counted, for they were the only real values.

His audience, that complacent contented audience of Melrose, flushed and paled and looked at one another with startled eyes. During all the years of war they had slept in soft beds, dressed, bathed, perfumed and manicured their bodies. They had come there that night from tables sparkling with cut glass and laden with exquisite food. The women had done a certain amount of Red Cross work, in fine rooms, amid the pleasant gossip of their friends, but those delicate hands had not been hurt by labour nor had they touched the loathsomeness of putrid wounds. They had never learned to distinguish between themselves and their bodies. At Church on Sunday, in decorous acts of worship, they had sung hymns and uttered words which implied that distinction, but it was as unreal to them as the imaginary demarcations which run between states and counties. Suddenly they saw the body, over which they had expended the chief energy of their lives, exhibited for what it really

was, a tissue of corrupting flesh and sinew that might be torn from them in an instant. It was a thing perishable, negligible, of no account, that might be dispersed in fragments to the winds or used to build trenches in the dreadful promiscuity of corruption. And there was an immense insult and affront in the thought, a subtle horror, an indecency of exposure and improper revelation.

Grandeur was there, too; a remote grandeur of heroism of which they had read in old histories, but of which they had no living knowledge. It was found to-day in all kinds of men, the scholar and the thug, the saint and the criminal, the West Point officer and the Bowery bum. Men with whom they would never think of associating, men coarse and common and sometimes base, had displayed it. You could draw no line between them. They were a democracy of death. They rose equally to great occasions as they mingled their blood equally on shell-torn trench and barbed wire entanglements. Their whole secret lay in one quality, self-surrender. They had ceased to live for themselves and had become possessed by something larger than themselves. To think of them was to see all other forms of life as paltry. The dead Bowery bum, who, in his dying, had risen to the supreme self-sacrifice, had attained a moral height which not all the wealth and culture of the world could give him. He was as superior to the complacent plutocrats of Melrose as Christ upon his cross was to the priests and Sadducees who sat down to dine at ease while the world was darkened.

They were busy doing things for the soldier; had they ever thought of what he had done for them? They talked of caring for his morals, as if he were a wicked child who wanted a nurse or an officer of the Juvenile Court to look after him: did they comprehend that he had created a new standard of morality, infinitely superior to their own? They talked of what they must do for him on his return; had they understood that when he came back it would be as their moral master, with a new decalogue which he would impose on them? For he had learned what they had never learned, that until men are willing to fling life away they don't know what living is. Men stagnate and rot until something bigger than themselves gets hold of them, and flings them forth into new orbits where self is forgotten. This was what war was, the great emancipation from self. It gave to multitudes of obscure men the only chance of real living which they had ever known. It brought to them and to all men the one imperishable ethic of all nobility, that he that saves his life loseth it, and he who is willing to lose his life for a just cause saves it unto life eternal.

So far I summarise the speech of Chalmers that night before that select audience in Smithson's ballroom. Some of the things he intended to say he never so much as alluded to: that definition of America's part in the war, for example, which Smithson expected from him. It probably seemed unessential to him; certainly he did not omit it from any fear of giving offense. I think it was the nature of his audience that determined the current of his thought. He

wanted to get under the skin of their complacency. There were a good many things of a personal nature that rankled in his mind, particularly that painful impression of corrupted sweetness in Mary. The change in her he charged to Melrose society. These were the men and women who had corrupted her. Probably he was unjust to them, for they were really kindly and pleasant folk, and after all no character is corrupted that has not the potency of corruption in itself. But they looked so contented with themselves, one might think they supposed they had won the war by knitting socks and buying Liberty bonds. They looked smug—there was no other word that described them. And so he became angry the moment he saw them, and was filled with a kind of prophetic indignation.

Certainly he offended them, and far more deeply than he could have done by any criticism of America's part in the war, such as he had intended. He offended them by exposing their souls to them. They expected to be praised and he accused them. They proposed to lionise him, for which purpose the lion must be tame. He was a lion who flung the fillets of flowers from his mane, and turned on them to rend them. To the spectator the effect was almost comic; they looked so huddled, confused, frightened. One almost expected to see them jump on chairs, or hide in cupboards, or run away, eager to find any kind of shelter. They were too alarmed even to demonstrate against their lion. They sat in miserable silence, some flushed, some pale, all unhappy. When he concluded,

no one clapped but Mr. Smithson, who did so out of a sense of social obligation; the rest left the room in indignant and almost undignified flight.

There were, however, some exceptions. At the close of his address a lady dressed in deep black, accompanied by a young aviator, came forward to thank him. She spoke in a shaken voice, and with tears in her eyes.

"I am Mrs. Sanford. I know what war is," she said. "My son——"

He looked enquiringly at the youth beside her.

"No," she said quietly, "this is not my son. My son is dead. This is his friend, who is visiting me. He came to bring me the few belongings that my son had with him when he died."

Her pale fine face was suddenly illumined.

"I am proud that he died for his country," she said. "I don't grudge him. I did grudge him at first, it seemed that I couldn't bear to think of him as dead. But as you spoke to-night, there came to me the understanding of what you called spiritual values. I was able to think of him as a soul for whom death was not the end. I didn't see in my mind any longer the poor broken body—night and day I've been seeing that. I saw his soul marching on, and the thought has given me great peace. I shall grieve for him still—I can't help that—but not in the same way. O, no—not in the same way, not rebelling against my fate and his—for I realise now that he died at his noblest moment—if he had lived many years he could have touched no

nobler moment—he died before he had time to sink lower than that noblest moment."

"Ah," said Chalmers, "that's why so many of us are almost sorry that we have survived. We're afraid we've touched our noblest moment."

The young aviator flushed at the words.

"I know what that means," he said in an embarrassed voice. "It's as though you're almost ashamed of being alive, isn't it?"

"But we mustn't think that way, either, must we?" said Mrs. Sanford. "That's a kind of cowardice, isn't it? You dear boys haven't been afraid of dying, and you mustn't be afraid of living. Perhaps after all it's easier to die at the height of a great emotion than to live nobly through the years which have no great emotions. We can make the memory of our highest moments the impulse of our moments that are less high, can't we?"

"That's what I want to do," said Chalmers. "But one has a terrible sense sometimes of having stepped down to a lower plane of being."

"I know how you feel," she said. "But you mustn't think too hardly of us here in Melrose. There are some here who have suffered as I have. Of course those who haven't suffered can't understand. It's not altogether their fault. But I mustn't keep you. Hadn't we better join the others?"

They went into the large mahogany-panelled dining room where refreshments were being served. As they passed a group near the door Chalmers heard an ironical voice saying, "Why didn't someone tell me I was

coming to hear a sermon? Why, he talked like the Judgment Day. I assure you I never felt so uncomfortable in my life." To which a girl's voice replied, "I wonder what Mary Challoner thought of it? She must have been surprised."

"Did I really preach a sermon?" he said to Mrs. Sanford. "I didn't mean to."

"I'm afraid you did," she answered with a smile. "But you needn't be ashamed of it. It was the kind of sermon we needed to hear."

He looked round the crowded room. There was a tremendous noise of clamant conversation, above which rose the strains of a noisy pianist and a string band. The band was playing in an alcove between the dining-room and the ball-room. Some of the young girls and young men were already moving into the ball-room eager for the dance. The waiters were rapidly removing the chairs and clearing the floor. In the dining-room the older people stood in groups, talking eagerly. They looked a little askance at him, but it was not in their natures to be discourteous. They greeted him with polite curiosity. After all was he not Hugh Challoner's nephew, and one of themselves? Of course he had behaved in a very eccentric fashion, which justified their resentment, but had he not really distinguished himself in the war?

"He was ill a long time, quite lost his mind," said one large lady, magnificently bejewelled, to her friend, a slim elderly woman, with an ironic mouth.

"Ah, that accounts for it," was the retort. "I thought he seemed a little mad, didn't you?"

"But he really was very rude, and I think his uncle should talk to him about it. Why, he talked to us as if we were heathens."

"Well, at all events, we've had a new sensation. We should be grateful for that."

"But a most unpleasant sensation, my dear. Ah—here he is."

The large lady bowed quite graciously as he passed. She had made up her mind to forgive him.

And now that the shock of his speech was passed, there was a growing disposition to forgive him. As the lady with the ironic mouth had said, they had had a new sensation. A great deal might be forgiven a man who could produce a new sensation.

The movement to the ball-room had become general. Already the band was playing a gay tango, and several couples were on the floor.

Hugh Challoner came through the crowd, his lips smiling, but his brow wrinkled with doubt.

"You spoke excellently, my dear boy," he said, "but——"

He did not finish the sentence.

"Won't you stay for the dance?" he finished abruptly.

"Is Mary staying?"

"She's already dancing."

"I think not," said Chalmers quietly.

Challoner looked irritated and annoyed.

"I will wait for you both in the conservatory," said Chalmers. "I'm really tired, uncle, and you know I never was much of a dancer."

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"I will wait for you both in the conservatory," said Chalmers. "I'm really tired, uncle, and you know I never was much of a dancer."

"Very good," said Challoner, "as you wish. I'll make your explanations to Mary."

He went away. In a few minutes the dining-room was deserted. Chalmers slipped on his army overcoat, and went into the conservatory. Outside was a broad terrace, silvered by the moonlight. He lit a cigar, and sat down on a stone seat, at the end of the terrace. The immense quiet of the night lay upon the earth. He did not think—thought seemed dissolved; he sank into a condition of passivity. Life appeared a dream, Smithson and the crowd of people in the ball-room but shadows on a mirror, a cloud of breath that stained it for a moment, then melted into nothingness. He must have sat there a long time, when he was conscious that the distant dance music had stopped and a light footstep echoed on the tessellated floor of the conservatory. Mary Challoner stepped out upon the terrace. Her back was to the sinking moon, so that her face was to him only a pale oval, destitute of expression. A swift reaction from his condition of passivity stirred him. Here was no breath upon a mirror, but a living beautiful creature, instinct with thought and feeling, and he knew he wanted her. He had been wanting her through all those years of separation and deadly peril. In spite of all that he had seen of fault and failing in her, he wanted her still.

"Mary," he said, "there's something I want to say to you. Will you listen, dear?"

"I can't stop more than a minute or two, John. I've promised the last dance to Harry Johnson. Father

sent me to tell you we're going home in a quarter of an hour."

Her voice sounded cold and formal.

He stood beside her, trying to read the expression in her face.

"Mary," he said, "do you know I love you? Do you love me?"

"I thought I did once. It was when you went to the war. But I find I was mistaken. You are changed. You are not the same man."

"My love is not changed, Mary."

"Ah, but you are. You don't know it, perhaps, but you are. You've become so dreadfully serious."

"I've had things to make me serious, but I've never ceased to think of you, and always in one way."

A note of impatience and scorn came into her voice. It rang keen and clear as the clash of swords.

"But I haven't thought of you in that way—that's the point. If I had, what you've done to-night would have cured me. You've made yourself ridiculous. Everybody's talking about it. And you've refused to dance with me. You've preferred to sit out here and sulk. You've made me ashamed of you."

"Why, Mary, I never thought——"

"No," she interrupted, "you've not thought of anyone but yourself. I prefer people who are a little more human, a little more ordinary, if you like. Ever since you came back you've been trying to make me feel that I'm not up to your standard. Perhaps I'm not, but one thing I'm sure of, I don't want to be.

So please don't speak to me again as you've spoken to-night. I assure you that it's useless."

"Mary, dear, won't you listen a moment. Let me explain."

"I can't stop. I must go back for the last dance."

The music had recommenced. She turned from him without another word.

So this was the end of all his dreams. He felt a little stunned and bewildered. Yet he could not say that she had given him no warning of the real nature of her thoughts. From the first hour of his return he had been conscious of a gulf that had opened between them. With pained recognition he saw now what that gulf really was. The war had created a new order of men and women. They alone understood each other. They understood each other through the sacrament of shared experiences. Mrs. Sanford, with whom he had talked but a few minutes, understood him, because she had lost her son. The old man grieving for his son in the train from Plymouth, the Red Cross nurses, the young naval lieutenants—they understood each other and he understood them. They spoke a common language, the language of a common experience. His uncle, Mary, Smithson, all this pleasant crowd of comfortable persons in Smithson's ball-room did not understand. Those who had gone through Gethsemane remained a race apart. Those who sat and warmed themselves by the fire in the High Priest's Court were also a race apart. Henceforth mankind was divided into two classes only, those baptised by suffering into a new commun-

ity, and those who were unbaptised. There were no more French, British or Americans—the new alignment rested on spiritual bases, the new separation was of the soul, not the blood. With an intense luminousness of thought he saw these things. They had the distinctness and authority of a revelation. He had lost Mary, not because either he or she willed it, but because they were moving on different planes of being.

And then, quite suddenly, and without definite volition on his part, his thought turned to Claire Gunnison. She was a woman created by the war. She had not been able to detach his heart from Mary as long as the ideal of Mary, which he cherished in his heart, was unassailed. He saw her now with different eyes. Her views of life had startled and offended him, but what a largeness of generosity was in her nature, what tenderness and comprehension. Certain words of hers, spoken on that day when they parted in New York came back to him—"If ever you should need me, you will find me your true friend." It was imperative that he should leave Melrose. It would be painful both to himself and Mary to meet again in common intercourse. Had not the hour come when he needed and might claim Claire's friendship?

The dance-music in the ball-room still continued. He felt that he could not face the light-hearted crowd that would presently come forth from its doors. He wanted to be alone. He found his army cap, left word with the butler that he was walking home, and, crossing the terrace, stepped down into the silent garden and the spacious night.

CHAPTER VI

YALE

I

In the foyer and passages of the Biltmore there was an immense coming and going of all sorts of people. Chalmers sat alone watching the moving crowd. He had left Melrose that morning after a difficult interview with his uncle.

"I don't understand your attitude at all," Hugh Challoner had said to him. "I did hope that you and Mary would have arranged your affairs differently. I'm not as young as I was, and I confess it would have been a great satisfaction to me if you could have entered my office, and in time taken my place and settled down with Mary at Melrose."

"I'm afraid that is impossible," he replied.

"I don't see why it should be. Mary is after all a child and doesn't know her own mind. You've startled her, I can see that. She's frightened. If you'll give her a little time to understand you better I think things will come right. Don't you think you ought to try?"

"It's not a question of understanding me, uncle. It

seems we've moved apart. We're neither of us what we were four years ago."

"You're very much the same," Challoner replied with a grim smile. "You know you were always very resolute in your own opinions. Somehow you never quite fitted into the ordinary scheme of things. I don't suppose you're quite aware of it. But let me tell you—and I say it in all kindness—life has taught me that the more we stick to normal paths the more likely are we to find happiness."

"Am I abnormal then?"

"I think you are at present. You're strained and excited. I'm not surprised at that, considering all you've been through. I can't quite express what I mean, but it seems to me you're a little hysteric. Why don't you go away and play golf for a month? You want something to take your thoughts off yourself, and there's nothing like golf for that."

Had he become abnormal? Chalmers wasn't sure. What was normality? Was it simply doing what everyone else did, thinking what everyone else thought? If this was normality, it was indistinguishable from dullness. It was a base weed which grew out of a soil in which individuality was buried.

Chalmers looked at his uncle's tired face, and thought of what his life had been. The pursuit of normality had done little enough for him. A certain collect which he had often heard in Church spoke of following too much the devices and desires of our own heart. The real trouble with men was that they didn't follow them enough. The desires and devices of his

own heart would have made Hugh Challoner a professor and perhaps a college president, in which position all the finest elements of his nature would have thrived. By refusing to follow them he had become a jaded rich man. He had really thwarted the true impulses of his nature, and in living what the world prescribed as a normal life had forfeited superiority and missed true happiness.

As if in unconscious affirmation of this diagnosis Challoner again spoke wistfully of his sense of approaching age.

"I'm growing old, and I want someone to succeed me, John. I've not got out of life what I hoped for. I've succeeded in what I set out to do, but there's a kind of emptiness in it all. But if I could see you and Mary married, and settled in the old house, with children round you, I should feel that after all I'd made something worth while of my life."

He had succeeded after his fashion, and found emptiness. Yet he wanted his nephew to tread the same path. Chalmers was conscious of the irony in the appeal, but still more of the pathos.

"I do deeply appreciate your kindness," he said, "and it seems churlish to refuse it. Some of the things you plan for me I may perhaps be able to do. I may be glad and thankful to enter your business. I don't know. I can't promise. I think in any case I had better go away now."

"Yes, go away, and give yourself time to think things over quietly, my dear boy. I don't want to hurry you. And don't forget what I said about golf

—it's the finest remedy in the world for introspective thought."

In this rare exchange of confidences he had come nearer to his uncle than he had ever been before. He parted with him in a spirit of real tenderness. Challoner came with him to the station, and saw him comfortably settled in the club-car, and put his arm round his shoulders as he said good-bye.

"Don't let anything that Mary said distress you," was his last piece of advice. "One thing I can tell you with confidence, she's heart-whole. If she doesn't love you, she doesn't love anyone else. That's some consolation, isn't it?"

He was not sure that it was. As the train moved off, speeding through the sunny silent landscape, he had a sense of escape. He was leaving something that he was not reluctant to leave. He was breaking a chain.

He could not define his sensations with any rational lucidity. All that he valued most in human life was at Melrose. The place was endeared to him by long familiarity. Yet some mysterious instinct warned him that his life was not to be lived there; that Melrose, with all its kindly associations, was inimical to him. He even felt a sense of relief when the train rounded the long curve of the valley, and the pleasant hills, with their carefully scattered mansions, sunk out of sight.

Yet he felt bereaved and lonely. He felt as the most eager of sea adventurers feels when the shoreline becomes a bank of mist, and the uncompanion-

able sea stretches out, league after league, in dazzling emptiness. The unadventurous life of narrow streets, red-tiled roofs, old gardens, all rooted in an immemorial past, a secure hive of men, wherein human creatures go about the toils of life, in the old common ways of love and birth and death, certain of a rest at last beneath the sod where their childish games were played, never calls the voyager with so strong a lure as in the moment when he turns his back on it. Loneliness is three-parts recollection. Chalmers had never felt so lonely as that night when he sat solitary in the Biltmore watching the moving crowd.

II

In the crowd he saw a figure he recognised—Major Caldwell. They had parted in London with the hope of meeting again in New York, but no correspondence had passed between them. It was both a surprise and delight thus to meet.

At the end of the corridor they found a quiet corner and began to talk eagerly of all that had happened since that last night in London.

"I left unexpectedly on the boat that followed yours," Caldwell explained.

"How does America impress you?" said Chalmers.

"Very strangely," said Caldwell. "It seems to me as if it stands at the cross-roads of destiny—it's either going a long step forward or it will step a long way back."

"Forward to idealism, back to materialism, eh?"

"Precisely. And I don't know which. Anything may happen."

They began to talk of men they had known.

"By the way," said Caldwell, "I've got some news about your two friends Foley and Baldy. Foley, it seems, is trying to create some kind of league of soldiers to control national politics. Baldy has been before the magistrate for resisting the police."

He drew from his pocket-book two newspaper cuttings, which he handed to Chalmers.

The first was from a Baltimore paper. It gave an account of a meeting held in a large hall in Baltimore at which Foley had made what the reporter called an inflammatory speech. The substance of it was that returning soldiers had had a raw deal from the government. They had come back to find the situations they had held before the war occupied by others, and no sustained or intelligent effort had been made to find them work. They had gone from place to place, seeking employment, only to find the supply of labour far in excess of the demand. In many instances the jobs they had left were held by women, who were working at a lower wage. It was the old story of the ingratitude of nations to returning soldiers. There was only one remedy, a combination of soldiers strong enough to control politics. There were three million of them; let them combine. Let them insist on nominating only soldiers for all public offices. Since the country would not give justice, let them take it. It was time to tell the whole tribe of selfish and muddled politicians, the fat, contented bourgeoisie who had profited

by the war, that three million men trained in the use of weapons of war were not to be trifled with——"

The paragraph about Baldy was very brief—it stated that a Canadian private, giving the name of William Baldwin, but commonly known as Baldy, had been arrested for soliciting alms on the public streets, and had resisted the police. His defence was that he could get no work. He was remanded for further enquiries.

"You knew both these men intimately, didn't you?" said Caldwell.

"Yes, I did. Baldy's one of the best little fellows who ever lived. If he says he can't get work I'm sure he speaks the truth, for he is the kind of man who really loves work. As for Foley, he's an Irishman, with an Irishman's genius for politics, and an Irishman's genial recklessness. As for his idea of a Soldier's League, it's something I've thought of myself, and so have thousands of others. I don't think we need trouble ourselves over Foley—he's quite capable of taking care of himself. But I owe Baldy a debt that I can never repay, and I feel I ought to go to him at once and see what can be done for him."

"I can help you there," said Caldwell. "The thing that brought me home so suddenly was a request from the Administration to give help in organising a board which is to deal with this very problem of unemployed soldiers. If you like I'll arrange for us both to see Baldy to-morrow morning."

"I'll certainly go with you."

"And now tell me something about yourself. What have you been doing since your return?"

From the first he had recognised in Caldwell qualities which drew out confidence. It was not only that he recognised in him intellectual sympathies, but what is much more rare, spiritual comprehension. What he had found so painfully lacking at Melrose was this quality of spiritual comprehension. And so, being still overwrought emotionally by his experiences at Melrose, he poured out his heart without reserve to Major Caldwell.

He told him of the hopes with which he had gone to Melrose and of his bitter disappointment.

"I felt all the time," he said, "as though I did not belong to their world nor they to mine. I was an alien. I was speaking into a void. It was something like those air-pockets aviators describe, sudden holes in the atmosphere into which the aeroplane drops helplessly. I had been sailing along in strong air and bright sunshine; then suddenly the void met me, and I went toppling down into its grim pit. You can't have winged thoughts or winged emotions in the atmosphere of Melrose. It was the dull self-satisfied complacency of everyone that hurt me most. I kept asking myself was this America, the true America, which had risen to so great a height of idealism? Had all the idealism come tumbling down like the aeroplane in the air-pocket? Or had America never really soared, never put on the wings of the morning?"

"No, it wasn't the real America," said Caldwell.

"It was no more the real America than the occasional air-pocket is the atmosphere."

"But you can realise how I felt?"

"Perfectly. We all feel it more or less. You have come across a worse air-pocket than most of us, that's all."

"Well, I hope I'll have strength enough to climb up into the buoyant air again."

"Of course you will. And, if you'll let me, I'll prescribe for you. We'll look after Baldy to-morrow, and then, unless you've some good reason against it, we'll go down to Yale for the week-end. I'm going in any case. I want to look up my old friends, and I'd really like you to come with me. I think you'll find another America there, the true America. If you want to know the soul of a country go where the young are. Old men and very prosperous men have often lost their souls. Young men, thank God, haven't had time to lose theirs. And what the young men of to-day think the world will think to-morrow."

"All right. I'll come. But we must look after Baldy first."

"Baldy first, of course. Perhaps it wouldn't be a bad plan to take him with us. I fancy he too, poor fellow, has got into a peculiarly dismal air-pocket."

They saw Baldy next day. The influence of Major Caldwell had been exerted to obtain his release, and about ten o'clock he came to the Biltmore. The little man, in spite of his misfortunes, looked very trig and neat; his worn uniform was carefully brushed, he was

clean-shaved, and his chubby face wore its characteristic grin.

"Well, Baldy, what's this I hear about you?" said Chalmers.

"I've been in a little trouble, sir. But 'twasn't my fault."

"They say you resisted the police, Baldy."

"'Twasn't exactly resisting, sir; not what you'd call resisting. I might have given the cop a bit of a shove; but how was I to know he'd call it resisting?"

"But you were begging, weren't you?"

"I were. And I'd like to know what else there was to do? Also, it weren't exactly begging. I asked a gentleman if he could tell me where I could get work, and it wasn't my fault if he gave me a dollar, now was it? On my oath that's all I did, and then the cop come along. I guess he wanted that dollar."

Baldy's explanation was delivered with such an air of engaging innocence, that both Caldwell and Chalmers broke into laughter.

"And then you remonstrated with him, eh?"

"Just a little shove with my elbow, that's all, sir. But I guess that cop wasn't in good condition. He were a fat man. He looked like a Hun."

"But about getting work, Baldy, what's the trouble?"

"Why just this, there ain't any for a man like me."

"I thought there was a scheme to put you on a farm. Canada has lots of land to give away; you know you can claim a hundred and sixty acres of homestead land."

"And what do I want with a farm, sir? I know all about them farms. I've heard them talked about often enough. They ain't farms, they're just land, and usually fifty miles from nowhere. If a man don't mind being lonely, and never seeing nothing but his own shadow, he might have a shot at it, but I ain't that sort of man. I like being with folks. I can't fancy sitting like a lonely jackrabbit on a hundred and sixty acres of land, with not a living soul to speak to. I've been living with men, and for all that folk at home think of it, a camp's a jolly sort of place, with lots of fun and company, and war ain't half as bad as it's painted. At all events there ain't no time to be melancholy; but out there, on one of these 'ere give-away farms, I know I'd be drove to suicide inside of six weeks."

The genial grin disappeared from Baldy's face as he spoke, and his chubby face was sharpened into a look of tragic intensity.

"I'm not afraid of work, you know that, sir," he added earnestly. "I'm ready to do most anything, but it's hard to find nobody wants you. Sometimes I'm kind of sorry I ever came back. I'd ha' been happier if I'd died out there, like so many did."

"But what sort of work do you really want, Baldy?"

"Well, sir," he said, his good humour returning, "if you'll let me say it, your buttons ain't shone up like they used to be, and whoever cleaned your boots didn't know his job overwell. You'd ha' strafed me good and hard if I'd let you go out in those there trenches a-looking like you do. Can't you take me on

as your batman again? I'd serve you honest, an' as for money, anything you says goes."

"So you think my boots aren't the proper thing," said Chalmers with a laugh.

"I know they ain't, sir. You've been to these 'ere shoe shine parlours, where they put acid on the leather, what rots it. I use elbow-grease, which is what they never heard of. If you'd just let me have a turn at 'em, I'd soon show you the difference."

"Well, they might be improved, certainly," said Chalmers.

"They might," said Baldy with emphasis. "Won't you let me have a go at 'em?"

"All right," said Chalmers. "I don't really know what to do with a valet, but I'm not going to let you take to begging, Baldy, and try your hand at assaulting policemen."

"Not assaulting, sir—only expostulating, so to speak. Just a little shove with my elbow, that's all."

"I'm afraid your elbow is rather a remarkable one, Baldy. I rather think, applied as you applied it to the cop, it must have resembled pretty closely the kick of a horse."

"It's a very good elbow for cleaning boots, anyway," said Baldy, with his most insinuating grin. "And now, sir, since you've engaged me as your val—, I mean your batman, will you please tell me what you want me to do for you, after I've attended to these here boots and buttons?"

"I'm going to take you a little journey with me, Baldy. We're going to Yale. You'll find my best

uniform in my trunk. You'd better get it out, and clean the buttons, and pack my valise. But I needn't tell you what to do. You know all about it. And, let me tell you, Baldy, I'm delighted to have you back again."

"I'll serve you faithful," he replied. "I always did, and I always will, sir."

"Well," said Caldwell, when Baldy left the room, "that man represents one of the serious problems of what we call reconstruction. We want to reconstruct him on a plan of our own, and he doesn't want to be reconstructed in our way. What he says about a camp being a jolly place is quite true. He's had the time of his life as a soldier—good food, genial company, sports, amusement, and all that kind of thing. The civilian never thinks of that side of things. The picture he draws in his mind of a soldier's life is all bloodshed, horror and misery; he does not understand the brotherhood of camps. He assumes that the soldier has done his bit against the grain, with an unappeasable desire to get it done; whereas he has really been happier than he ever was before, and dreads the return to civil life a good deal more than he ever dreaded wounds and death. And so the wise people who sit in swivel chairs imagine that the returning soldier will jump at any chance of quiet and security. Whereas the one thing he's become totally unfitted for is the kind of quiet which implies separation from his fellows."

"The loneliness of a farm, I suppose you mean."

"The worse loneliness, as Baldy put it, not of a

farm, but of land in some remote place, where human society is lacking. The whole nature of his life has made him a social creature, with strong ties of fellowship, and a great sense of dependence on others. How can you expect him to cut himself off from all this, and settle on a lonely homestead fifty miles from a railway? He can't do it. If you paved his hundred and sixty acres with gold and diamonds, he'd still hate the solitude, and long for crowded streets, movies, theatres and the gay bustle of collective life. You can tempt a horse with good pasturage on a solitary prairie, though even the horse, for all I know, has his own memory of frantic gallops with the guns, and would neigh with delight to hear again the cry of trumpets and the shouting of the captains. But you certainly can't tempt a soldier who has known the heroic collective energy of mortal struggles with any such paltry bribe."

"But I thought the plan was for what may be called neighbourhood farms, a sort of community farming."

"The plan, yes. If the scheme had been begun at the beginning of the war, it might have amounted to something by this time. But no one looked far enough ahead for that. The result is that millions of men have come back without any adequate plan for their employment. I don't say the community farm hasn't attractions. I can conceive a series of farms all gathered round an accessible centre, so that social relations might be possible. And I can conceive thousands of men, used to an open air life, reluctant to return to sedentary pursuits and unfitted for them,

eager to live upon the land. But they won't consent to be marooned. And the community farm, which was to give them an open air life without the isolation of the remote homestead, is still very much of an unfulfilled dream. We are working toward it, no doubt; but in the meantime men like Baldy may very easily drift into Bolshevism and even crime."

"Bolshevism?"

"Yes, Bolshevism, for what is Bolshevism but this, exasperation at injustice? Every man is contented as long as he believes that society is giving him a fair deal. The moment he believes society is not dealing fairly with him he is ready to deal unfairly by society, and will not stop by claiming what is justly his, but will seize on that to which he has no claim. That is what Bolshevism is—the robbed becoming robbers."

The conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Baldy. The little man's face was red and smiling, and small beads of perspiration stood on his forehead. He laid upon the table a military tunic, the buttons of which shone like gold, and put on the floor beside the table a pair of long military boots, so highly polished that they were actually dazzling.

"You can see your face in them, sir," he said proudly.

He bustled into the bath-room, and could be heard stropping Chalmers' razors.

"Small danger of Bolshevism there," said Chalmers, with a smile.

"No man is a Bolshevist," retorted Caldwell, "who has something to do that he believes he can do better

than anyone else, if it's only cleaning boots and polishing buttons. The Bolshevist is a man who has nothing to do that fits his capacity, so he turns his capacity to mischief. The Bolshevist achieves evil simply because he's not had an adequate opportunity of achieving good."

III

The next day, Saturday, they went to Yale. To both Chalmers and Caldwell it was a true homecoming.

What is it makes the charm of Yale? It does not bear comparison with Oxford. It is not finely placed as some other American universities are. The university buildings can nowhere be seen to advantage. They do not rise out of green lawns smooth with the passage of the centuries, they stand in no dignified isolation, they are reflected in no clear, tranquil streams; everywhere the sordid town intrudes on them, smothering their beauty, jealous of their charm, hiding their significance. The old town green, with its two white churches and its vast elms, still remains, as a souvenir of a simple and austere past. The quiet which should environ halls of learning is invaded on all sides by the clang of trolleys, the wheels of commerce, the noises of incessant human struggle for the material rewards of life. Yet the charm is there, something impermeable and buoyant, that hovers in the air; something intangible and spiritual, a perfume blown from hidden sources, a conversation of ethereal presences in the upper spaces of the sky, waves of

thought that pass to and fro, penetrating the lower atmosphere with a sense of brightness and harmony. The very contiguity of this commercial world gives poignancy to this other world of idealism on which it impinges, which it invades and would like to overwhelm. It is so easy to leave it, to forget it; to pass from the thronged street beneath some arched gateway, and find a cloistral silence. The two worlds in which man resides, the world of the bodily life and the city of the mind, nowhere come together in such sharp contrast, such visible antagonism. Perhaps that is the charm of Yale; a charm of vivid contrast, of visible collision between the outward and the inward life of man. It is as though in a noisy room, crowded with mediocre persons, a beautiful woman should appear, calm-browed, reticent, freshly virginal, drawing to herself the initiated, and divinely ignorant of the jealous inferiorities which surround her and would push her to the wall.

Here Caldwell had taught, here Chalmers had spent his youth, and as they drove past the familiar buildings Chalmers wondered whether he had ever been so truly happy as in Yale. Many memories came to him of long aimless conversations in college rooms, with much happy jesting, and occasional shy rapid disclosures of more intimate thought and feeling. He had sometimes grumbled at the restrictions of the life, but he saw now how real was its freedom. Its privileges were so many, its obligations so few. The joy of life was so fresh: the menace of life was so little realised. And then had come the sudden catastrophe

of upheaval, like a fire-bell ringing in the darkness of the night, and he had woke to find the world ablaze. In a single hour his boyishness had died, and Tragedy had touched him into manhood.

He passed the Elizabethan Club, with a vivid picture in his mind of its quaint low-ceilinged rooms and all its scholarly seclusion and simplicity. He had spent many hours there; he remembered, with a smile, that he had written verses there of which he was doubtfully proud, and had even sketched a drama. How differently had his life turned out from all that he had planned. From those quiet rooms to the battlefields of France how long a journey, what an unforeseen transition!

They drove up Prospect Hill, for the sake of the view; and then turned into one of those sedate streets where the professors lived—a street of very plain wooden houses with narrow lawns and thriving elms —and stopped at the door of Caldwell's home. After the palatial spaciousness of his uncle's house at Melrose, this seemed almost mean. The rooms were small, the ceilings low, the narrow staircase rose immediately out of the little hall, if such it could be called. The furniture was all plain, old-fashioned, of a Colonial solidity: but there were books everywhere, a few good etchings on the walls and flowers on the table. A kind of distinction was there, whose note was extreme simplicity. It was the Yale note, the characteristic expression of a general life expressed in the terms of the mind and not of material possessions.

They sat down to a plain meal, served by an old

housekeeper, for Caldwell was a bachelor. She was a thick-set person, in whom the latitude nearly equalled the longitude, with a shrewd old face seamed and wrinkled with an extraordinary intricacy. Her manner to Caldwell was neatly balanced between motherliness and respect, but she evidently did not know what to make of Baldy, who insisted on standing behind Chalmers' chair, and waiting on him with humble vigilance. After dinner they lit their pipes and talked, and Baldy vanished into the kitchen, where he insisted on washing up the dishes.

The talk was naturally of Yale men and Yale scenes. Name after name was mentioned, with the continual question "What became of him?——" and the frequent answer that linked his name with some heroism of the battlefields.

"You remember Letts' poem on the *Spires of Oxford*," said Caldwell. "There's one verse that is always in my mind, the last verse,

> God bless you noble gentlemen,
> Who laid your good lives down,
> Who took the khaki and the gun
> Instead of cap and gown;
> God bring you to some fairer place
> Than even Oxford town.

We have not given all that Oxford gave, but we've given all we had. There's been the same spirit of heroism here. I wish we could have seen the old place before the men put off their khaki, when it was a camp."

"I wonder how they're taking it?" said Chalmers.

"Most of them are bitterly disappointed that they

didn't get overseas. I've had letters from them, since the armistice was signed. They're full of a noble envy of those who got into the fight, even envy of those who died."

"That's how we all feel at times," said Chalmers. "You've quoted Letts' poem: do you recollect a yet more poignant one by Ford Madox Hueffer? It's called *One Day's List?* There are certain lines in it that stick in the mind, for they have seized on a real emotion and expressed it with a marvellous truth and force.

"But we who remain shall grow old,
We shall know the cold of cheerless
Winter and the rain of autumn and the sting
Of poverty, of love despised and of disgraces,
And mirrors showing stained and ageing faces,
And the long ranges of comfortless years,
And the long gamut of human fears.
But for you, it shall be forever spring,
And you shall be forever fearless,
And only you have white, straight tireless limbs.
And only you, where the water-lily swims,
Shall walk along the pathways, through the willows of your west,
You who went West.
And only you on silvery twilight pillows
Shall take your rest
In the soft glooms
Of twilit rooms . . ."

The beautiful lines, echoing through that quiet room, moved each of them deeply. They exposed, almost sacrilegiously, a thought that lay secret in their hearts, the fear that life's noblest crest was passed and henceforth the road of action sloped downward. And with it came a vivid picture of all those gallant Yale boys, each keyed up to the high rhythm of sacrifice, silently laying aside their unstained khaki, piling their unused

weapons, gazing with wistful eyes upon a road trodden by their fellows, where they would never tread.

"Well," said Caldwell. "I suppose God judges a man's intention as well as his performance. There are martyrs who do not die. The willingness to die is the chief thing, and is more than the mere fact of dying."

"But men can never see it in that way."

"No, the mass of men can't, but the best men can. I had a letter the other day from an old friend of mine, which touched this very point. He said, 'I suppose we shall soon be erecting monuments to our dead in every city of America, and it is perfectly right that we should. But I've been thinking that we shall miss one of the finest elements in the record of heroism if we don't erect monuments, too, to those who didn't have the chance to die. If St. Gaudens were still with us, he would see my point—he would design something like this—a young man, with his head bowed in a kind of noble shame over his discarded accoutrements which lie at his feet—his khaki tunic half stripped off—his hand across his brow, as if to shut out the vision of the empty years; and beside him, prone, grasping his other hand, the young man who dies—dies, claiming him as comrade. Do you see it? And on the pedestal the golden words, *"In eternal gratitude to the men who would have gone, but could not."*' That's my old friend's suggestion—what do you think of it?"

"It's something Yale must do. She must set the example. Yale knows what it means."

"Yes, Yale knows. Be sure of it, there's many a lad to-night, with his head bowed over some useless book, which he can't see for the hot tears that fill his eyes; because a vision of ships and the sea, and a winding road in France, fills his mind—and across the sea, and over the road from which a great cloud of dust is rising, made by the feet of marching men, blow the wailing trumpets of unappeasable regret. That's the lad I'm sorriest for."

Through the pleasant dusk they strolled down Hillside Avenue, and, coming to Wolsey Hall, found the door open, and entered that noble auditorium. There was light enough to see the class shields upon the walls, each with its record of the number of men who had served their country. Someone was practising at the organ. They could see his dark head aureoled by the electric light above the keyboards. He was playing vaguely and sweetly, and the long, soft reverberations filled the great spaces of the hall. His music was an evocation. One could fancy the great auditorium filling slowly at the call of the music; a ghostly company, silently filing in, till the galleries became "a cloud of witnesses." The students of an older day were there, frail presences with white hair and bowed shoulders; the men of to-day, some crippled and maimed, some drawn from distant graves in alien soil, with the pallor of a mortal agony upon their brows. Standing there, in that solemn emptiness, one could almost hear the brush of elbow on elbow in those moving ranks, the faint jingle of spurs, the whisper of lips, the intaken breath; and above all, in

the shadows of the roof, something that was like the rustle of wings, as though the spirits of the dead were there. Through that soft organ music, piercing and dominating it, thrilled another sound, the far-blown cry of trumpets and the noise of guns, distant and attenuated like echoes from a remote and warring star.

"It is here one feels the spirit of Yale," said Caldwell in a low voice.

"The spirit of eternal youth," Chalmers answered.

"The spirit which must save America, if it can be saved," was Caldwell's comment. "Wasn't it Arnold who called Oxford the home of lost causes? Yale is the womb out of which a new day is being perpetually reborn."

They went back to Caldwell's home, and till long after midnight, talked gravely and intimately of things seldom mentioned between men—the nature of the soul, the mystery of spiritual instincts, the real meaning of human life.

"I suppose in the last analysis," said Caldwell, "faith is simply a stubborn instinct in the existence of things which lie beyond the senses. One says, 'This must be true' of something that can't be proved true, and just rests there. When you've reached that point nothing can move you from it."

"Isn't that irrational?" asked Chalmers.

"Of course it's irrational. So are all the greater passions of life—love, sacrifice, heroism. The moment a man surrenders himself to an emotion greater than himself he moves out of the clutch of reason.

He's in a world of new dimensions. All the greatest acts of life are achieved by those who venture beyond reason."

"Is that how you interpret religion?"

"I do, most certainly. Religion is God's invitation to give ourselves to the play of unknown forces. I've never been in the least affected by the ordinary arguments for religion. There's the statement, for example, that for long ages men, who certainly appear wiser than ourselves, have believed certain things, and therefore we ought to believe them. But you know very well that even wise men are just as likely to believe lies as truths. The men who first formulated the doctrine of the Trinity believed in astrology, and it's a fair assumption that they were quite as wrong in one belief as the other. Besides which, there's never been a new truth given to the world except by smashing an old truth, which men had discovered to be no truth at all. No, I don't care a fig for tradition—it doesn't affect my mind. But there are moments when I sit alone at night, when I steal out from my dark corner of the universe, and am in a world of new dimensions. I'm conscious of moving somehow on a higher plane of being. Some phrase of Christ's flashes on the mind—a phrase I thought meaningless, and it breaks down all my doubt, and compels my assent. It has become true because for an instant I am in the plane of being where Christ moved. Do you understand?"

And to both men there came back the common

memory of battlefields, and the sense each had had many times of something immortal in man.

In a moment they had seen the physical man disappear. In the same moment there had come the strong conviction that only the physical had disappeared. The conclusion was irrational, yet inexpugnable. They felt—that was all that could be said—that all that composed human personality had found that higher plane of being—that the body was but the blood-stained uniform of the spirit, violently cast aside, but that the spirit lived.

"If the war has done nothing else," said Caldwell, "it has taught us all to distinguish between the body and the spirit. The essence of any real religion lies in that distinction."

"Ah, if we could only get the public exponents of religion to accept so simple a formula!" said Chalmers.

"Some do, and more will. I see there's a man preaching in the Battell Chapel to-morrow who should be worth hearing. He's a man who has suffered—you've heard of him, no doubt—Dr. Hannington. All his sons have been in the war, and all his relations of fighting age. Shall we hear him?"

They went to the Battell Chapel next morning. Every seat was filled, and on the faces of the men there was an unusual look of curiosity and interest. Just before the sermon the President rose, and made a gesture which brought the whole congregation to its feet.

"Since we last met," he said in a voice that

trembled with suppressed emotion, "two more of our number have died in the service of their country; John Williams, and Edgar Nelson, both serving in the army of occupation, the first as medical officer, the second as captain in the fifth regiment of the First infantry. Let us commend their souls to Almighty God."

The men stood silent, with bowed heads. In the stillness a slow sob was heard. It came from the mother of Nelson, who stood black-robed and motionless in the President's pew.

"Blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them," said the President.

A long deep sigh filled the chapel—then, with a shuffling of feet, the men sat down, and the preacher stepped to the desk.

What Caldwell had said of Dr. Hannington was obviously true; he had suffered. His fine face was deeply-lined, his hair, still abundant, quite white; but his figure was erect, and his voice firm and clear. He spoke very simply, enunciating very much the same view of life and religion which Caldwell had expressed the night before. The real gist of his message lay in its conclusion. He had been speaking of man's long dream of a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwell righteousness. Only men who had faith could dream that dream, and it was to men of faith the world owed even any partial accomplishment of the dream. History was the story of how the dreamers of humanity were justified by time. He instanced

Savonarola and Wordsworth as types of men who dreamed true—they were defeated and ridiculed, but the one knows how to say, "You can kill me, but you cannot kill the truth"; and the other to proclaim to his distressed friends, "Make your minds at rest concerning me: the world must come at last to accept the truths I teach." And then, as though he had suddenly become sensible of a look of enquiry in that throng of eager faces, he said, "I know how disappointed many of you are. You have had your dream of the heroic, and you would gladly have died for it. You've a greater thing to do—live for it. Hold fast to your dream. Let it not slip from you through spiritual lassitude, or be dimmed by fear or folly. You've dreamed of a new earth, built on finer lines, with more of moral symmetry and spiritual beauty. You've dreamed true, and it's for you to make your dream come true by the dedication of your lives to it."

The organ pealed out with the last hymn—that immortal prayer of human souls conscious of the gravity and splendour of human life triumphing over its apparent triviality—

> O God, our help in ages past
> Our hope for years to come—

The eyes of Chalmers instinctively sought the President's pew, and that black-robed mother for whom life was made empty of its hope and purpose. Would she go on dreaming of a new world? he thought. Could she find the courage to draw together again life's broken purposes, and weave them anew into a finer pattern? She had not risen with the rest; she

sat with bowed head—type and symbol of so many soldiers' mothers, whose eyes are fixed upon the grave where the torch of a noble life lies extinguished.

And then, behind her bowed head, in the pew of one of the professors, his startled eyes became conscious of another woman. She was standing erect, not joining in the hymn, her face turned toward the congregation, her eyes lifted up to the distant windows through which the sunlight poured. The sunlight illumined her face, so that it stood out distinct as a cameo against the dark wainscotted walls. She was Claire Gunnison.

IV

She looked more charming than ever, with her fair skin, her enchanting freshness of aspect, her grey-blue eyes uplifted to that sunlit roof. There was a sharp distinctness about her, which separated her so completely from the other women who surrounded her that she appeared a creature of another world. The other women, the professors' wives, quiet, modest, thoughtful women, beside her seemed lacking in vitality. There was about her a vividness, as of some rich flower, which draws its strength and colour from deeper sources than its neighbours.

Chalmers was the more keenly aware of this distinction because ever since he had come to Yale his heart had been lured by its academic peace. He had thought of it as a place to live in—he was under its spell as his uncle had been long before him, when he desired nothing better in life than a professor's chair.

All at once, as he looked at Claire, he became conscious of something attenuated in the Yale atmosphere. There was a certain blanched look about its inhabitants, a cloistral pallor. Their high-mindedness, their fineness, the contented simplicity of their lives, were real qualities, but they were the product of a certain abnegation. Claire Gunnison was the symbol of a life richer, fuller, freer. There was in her a music of higher chords, of ampler diapasons. She was modernity, she was the flower of a living day. She was vital with the life of a new world.

As the congregation moved out of the narrow doors, their eyes met. She flushed with evident pleasure. She remained standing in the pew till he came, and greeted him without embarrassment.

"I did not know that you were here," she said.

"Nor I you."

"So life *has* played us a trick," he said in a low voice.

"I am not complaining," she answered with a smile.

Explanations and introductions followed, of course. It seemed Claire was spending the week end with Professor Charteris and his wife. Mrs. Charteris was an eager-looking woman, with fine eyes and fast greying hair, and was a family friend of the Gunnisons. Claire had also met young Nelson, the dead infantry officer, in Paris, and had brought certain messages from him to his mother, and desired to be with her during the trial of the Yale service.

As they walked up Hillside Avenue to Professor

Charteris' house Claire spoke very tenderly of the dead boy and his mother.

"He wasn't a very strong man, physically I mean, but he had an amazing spirit. He was wounded at the Argonne with a splinter of shrapnel in his head, and that's how I came to meet him. He came to the hospital where I was, and he and I were great friends. He loved to talk of his mother—he was an only son—and he wanted to come home, O so much, and didn't at all fancy being used in an army of occupation. But he went back to his duty, of course, without complaint, although with a sense of sad presentiment. It was on the last night, before he went back, that he asked me if anything happened to him, to tell his mother that if he didn't come back she mustn't grieve for him. 'If I had to live my life again,' he said, 'I should live it in just the same way. There's nothing I would alter, and very little that I regret.' I was rather astonished at such a speech on the lips of a boy—for he was only twenty-three; it sank into my mind, as the final expression of all philosophic serenity."

"You never told me that you nursed in the hospitals, Claire."

"Didn't I? Well, I supposed you took it for granted."

They came to the home of Professor Charteris. It was a large, solidly built house, standing in green lawns, shaded by fine trees. Charteris was one of the few professors who was wealthy. He had inherited the house from his father.

"You'll stay to lunch," said Mrs. Charteris.

"I think Major Caldwell is expecting me."

"But we will ring up Caldwell—we shall be delighted to have him, too."

"I think that he is coming up the road now."

"Then that settles it," she said brightly. "I will wait for him and cajole him out of his fear of his housekeeper, who, I understand, is a very formidable old lady."

They sat down to lunch in the large dining-room which ran across the entire breadth of the house, with its three tall windows opening on the green lawns. The Professor, an alert white-haired man, many years older than his wife, took the head of the table. Mrs. Nelson, sombre and silent, sat upon his right, and Claire, with her vivid beauty, on his left.

The conversation was studiously confined to college matters out of consideration to Mrs. Nelson, until Caldwell happened to mention the name of Treitschke.

"Ah, a very remarkable man," said Charteris. "I studied under him. Let me see, it must be more than thirty years ago. All that Germany has since been and done had its origin in his teachings."

"Most of us have only just discovered him," said Caldwell.

"That is our own fault. He spoke plainly enough. It was he who said of the Cameroons, 'What do we want with that box of sand? Let us take Holland. We shall then have real Colonies.' He never concealed his complete contempt for anything but force. If you would like to see them, I still have my old

note-books, in which I took down his teachings in his own classrooms."

He left the table and came back in a few minutes with a handful of dingy note-books.

"I am a very methodical man," he said with a whimsical smile. "I have kept every paper I thought worth while keeping ever since I was a boy, and what's more, I can put my hand on it at a moment's notice."

He opened the faded pages, and began rapidly translating their records. The passage he hit upon was a dissertation on honour, which Treitschke admitted might have some sanction as between individuals, but none whatever between nations. The State was beyond good or evil. It was the supreme authority for all law, and therefore a law to itself. If France or Holland were necessary to the well-being of Germany, Germany had a perfect right to seize them. Power to act was the only guide to action. The limit of strength was the only limit to action.

"It sounds like the reasoning of a madman," said Caldwell.

"I would not say that," Charteris retorted. "The reasoning is perfectly lucid, luminous, sustained. The fault is not in the reasoning, but that it rests upon an absolutely un-moral basis."

"How did it affect you, when you heard it?"

"I didn't think much about it. I was too young. I found it novel and stimulating. I was at the age when it appears the most delightful thing in the world to fling all one's preconceived ideals of morals into

the crucible, and see what comes of the experiment."

"Isn't that what we are doing now?" said Claire.

She had listened with the keenest attention to Treitschke's opinions.

"I hope not," said Charteris gravely, "for it is a very dangerous experiment."

"But what I mean is this. Doesn't mankind accumulate such a tremendous impedimenta of obsolete opinions in course of time that it can't get forward at all? Must it not throw away a good deal of baggage before it can march to any new kingdom?"

"It depends on what you mean by baggage, my dear young lady. Treitschke considered a large part of the Ten Commandments baggage. His followers soon came to think of Christianity in the same way. They considered it a religion for slaves, and dropped it as useless impedimenta to a warlike nation with the will to conquest. The result we see."

"Nevertheless, the world must yield to new streams of tendency if it is ever to arrive at anything new, mustn't it?"

"According to my view of the universe there are only two permanent streams of tendency: one is the struggle for the individual life, the other the struggle for the lives of others. The one means seizing on everything for one's self, the other yielding everything for others."

"Not everything, Professor, surely not everything!"

"Everything that is of personal advantage and nothing else—that is what I mean."

"I'm afraid it's very hard to draw the line, isn't it?"

"No; on the contrary, I think it very simple. Let any one ask of any action he proposes, 'Is it my own benefit alone which I am seeking?' If it is, he may be quite sure that in the long run he will find that he is acting wrongly. If, on the other hand, he finds that the action he proposes is much more for the benefit of others than himself, he may be sure that in the long run he will find that he has acted rightly. Our safety lies in checkmating our own selfish desires; our destruction in yielding to them. If Germany had acted on the latter principle there would have been no war."

"But our desires are not always selfish. They may be intuitions which indicate a wider light, a truer freedom. How are we to distinguish?"

"Only by the test I have proposed. Is the benefit we seek a personal benefit, or is it a benefit for humanity? Where Germany was wrong was that what she sought was a benefit to Germany and no one else; the idea of benefit to humanity never appealed to her. And the same thing holds good in many other directions. We are all tempted to seize on personal benefit, to act for ourselves in contempt of the general good. In the long run I think we find that any action of ours which is not for the general good is bad for ourselves."

"I think I see what you mean, but I'm not sure I agree," said Claire.

Chalmers knew very well of what she was thinking.

There came back to him vividly those long conversations on ship-board, with Claire's reiterated assertion of her right to rule her own life after her own fashion. What he had wondered at when she uttered these views was that she did not see the implications of her thought. And he wondered now whether the quiet searching words of Charteris would make these implications clear to her.

"Aren't we getting a little too deep?" interposed the brisk voice of Mrs. Charteris. "Suppose we have our coffee on the lawn—it's too beautiful a day to spend indoors in philosophic discussion."

"I'm sorry I've bored you," said Charteris, gathering up his note-books.

"But you haven't bored us," said Claire. "You've given me a good deal to think of, for which I am grateful."

"It's very charming of you to say that," he replied, with an ironic bow. "I don't often find a new mind on which to inflict my views—it's a temptation to make the most of the opportunity—and you know a prophet is not without honour save in his own country."

V

They sat a long time under the shade of a great elm, enjoying the afternoon warmth and tranquillity. There was a wonderful peace in the air. The place was so enclosed with greenery that the neighbourhood of the city was forgotten. A soft bell called through the stillness and was answered by a yet more remote

bell; far away there was the dull reverberation of a rushing train; overhead the wind went in the tops of the trees, like the long sigh of a happy sleeper.

Conversation became fragmentary. It arose and died down again in little jets and springs of local gossip, personal allusions, pleasant anecdotes. Claire listened, with a thoughtful look upon her face, saying nothing. About three o'clock she rose, saying that she must get ready for the train.

"I didn't know you were leaving so soon," said Chalmers.

"I am going on the four train," she replied.

"Will you let me come to the station?"

"I shall be delighted."

At half-past three a Yale taxi, smallest of all taxis known to man, was at the door. They got into it. As it moved away Claire said, as if taking up some argument which had gone on in her own mind, "No, it won't do."

"What won't do, Claire?"

"The argument of Professor Charteris. It makes the world too tame. But then, Yale is tame, isn't it?"

"It's peaceful. Ever since I've been here, I've been thinking how good a place it would be to live in."

"I know you have. I watched your face as you sat on the lawn, and I could read your thoughts. All college towns affect one in that way. Oxford is the best example. It's like those lovely Thames backwaters into which a man drifts with a pipe and a book, and is content to dream through a long day."

"Yet it's from such places that the great heroes of the war have come."

"Precisely—they've come from them. They didn't stay in them. Had they stayed in them they would have fallen asleep. Yale's a phase in the long sequence of life. You can't return to it."

"What attracts me in Yale is the spirit of idealism. It seems to me as if places like Yale are the only places where idealism is vital."

"O no," she said earnestly, "I am sure that is not true. The true idealists are in cities. Idealism in Yale is a sort of vestal fire, carefully guarded and tended. Idealism in cities is a torch, struggling in fierce winds, and therefore burning with extraordinary vehemence. Idealism needs opposition to develop it."

"And so you think I couldn't live in Yale?" he said with a smile.

"I know you couldn't, my friend. You've moved in a big world of action. You can't crawl back into your cradle after that. There's only one excuse for a man of action entering the cloister—it's a broken heart."

"Well," he said, doubtfully— And then in a sudden rush of feeling he told her the hidden things of his heart. He did not mention the name of Mary Challoner. He said nothing of his disappointed hopes. But, unknown to himself, while he drew a picture of Melrose, with its spiritual deadness, its complacency, its hopeless alienation from the thoughts that were to him most vital, through the picture, like another

painted beneath it, was the figure of a woman who had contemned him. There ran through his hurried speech a poignant personal note, of which he was not aware. But the quick ear of Claire recognised it.

"So you are in trouble, my friend," she said quietly. "Do you remember that I told you that if ever you were in trouble you would find in me a true friend?"

"I was coming to you, Claire. It seems you've come to me instead."

"No, we've simply met because we had to. If we had each started at the furthest corner of the world, we should still have met, because it was so written."

"That's fatalism."

"I don't know what it is, but I know it's life. We set out to do one thing and find ourselves doing something quite different. It's like that curious illusion one has sometimes in a fast train—you think it's travelling in one direction when it's really moving in a direction totally opposite."

"In what direction are you travelling, Claire?"

"Who knows? Least of all, myself. But I am glad my line of life has crossed yours again. Are you a little glad, too?"

"Yes, I'm glad," he said simply.

He laid his hand on hers. He thrilled a little to find that her hand was not withdrawn.

The taxi drew up at the deplorable shanty which serves New Haven as a temporary station.

"May I come and see you in New York?" he asked.

"I hope you will. Indeed, I'll be perfectly frank, I've been expecting that you would."

"I wonder why you're so good to me, Claire?"

"A fellow feeling, I suspect. We've both got astray from beaten paths, haven't we? We find we don't fit into the scheme of things. We feel lost, don't we? Under the circumstances there seems to be a kind of wisdom in not adding to our misfortunes by losing each other."

The words had an implication which cut like a sharp edge through a velvet shield. Had he not wished to lose her? Had he not, in his secret thoughts, rather congratulated himself on losing her? That midnight scene on the ship came back to him vividly. She had told him that she was a woman who gave, but did not bargain; was not that the key to her whole nature? He recognised her magnanimity. Those errors of thought in her which he had so severely criticised were as nothing compared with this essential magnanimity. They were, at the worst, misapplied magnanimity.

"You are much too generous to me," he said humbly.

"Don't be so sure of that," she replied, with a little soft peal of laughter. He had never noticed before the quality of her laughter. Most people cackle, they don't laugh. Claire's laughter was a carillon of notes sweet as those of a thrush; a little scale, up which the voice ran, with each note clearly rounded.

"Don't be too sure," she repeated. "A woman's generosity should be suspected. She usually wants

to get as much as she gives—sometimes a good deal more."

Her laughter ceased. There was a suspicion of tears in her eyes.

"We're getting too introspective," she said. "Why can't we simply follow our feelings without analysing them? Let us take the gifts the Gods provide. Isn't that the highest human wisdom?"

"Which means?"—

"O just that we should be glad we've found one another again. We needn't go beyond that. If we can help each other to smooth out this tangle of life, let us do it, and ask no questions. The things of to-morrow will take care of themselves."

The distant whistle of the train was heard. The crowd of travellers was moving out of the dingy wooden hall to the dingier platform.

"I must go," she said. "You know my address. When shall I see you?"

"I shall be in New York to-morrow. May I call in the afternoon?"

"I shall expect you. I think I told you I was staying with relatives. I am staying with my Aunt Gunnison, who, I may warn you, is a most respectable widow of blue Presbyterian ancestry, and strict religious opinions. She also has a rooted conviction that all young men are dangerous, particularly army officers!"

"If she can put up with your heresies I'm sure she can with mine," he retorted.

They parted with smiles. The long train glided

slowly out, leaving behind it that curious sense of emptiness and desertion which is never so apparent as in a railway station, when a freight of human hopes and purposes has vanished, leaving only straggling groups of depressed people, who look as if life had denied them all adventure.

Chalmers walked back slowly to Caldwell's house, conscious only of a secret voice in his heart which said—"To-morrow, To-morrow."

VI

He went to bed early that night, less because he was tired than that he desired to be alone. He wished to think out his relations with Claire. She had asked nothing more from him than friendship, but was mere friendship possible between them? Was it ever possible between men and women in whom the pulse of life beat strongly? Nature was very sly in these things. She masked her intentions. Her intentions never stopped at friendship. She waited stealthily for the moment when a word too much, a glance too ardent, a lingering touch of clasped hands precipitated love. Was he prepared for that foreseen moment? Was not Claire secretly aware that it must come?

She was no coquette. No woman was freer from the conscious guile which ensnares men. But she was not ignorant of her own charm. She had already revealed her love, and was wise enough to know that such a friendship as she proposed must, in the long run, mean love. If he accepted her friendship was

he prepared to follow the path on which he entered to its logical conclusion?

He wearied his mind with this inward debate, going over again and again all the arguments with dull reiteration, as one does in the moments that precede sleep. At last the speed of thought began to slacken, like the wheels of a factory that slowly cease to revolve. The intense quietness of the room began to affect him like a narcotic. There came a little rippling wave of restfulness that ran across his mind, and was followed by another and another. He roused himself to pull the chain of the electric light beside his bed, and fell asleep.

At midnight he was roused by the opening of his bedroom door. He knew that it was midnight, because he heard the solemn striking of the clocks in the city through the stillness of the night. The door slowly swung back, a gust of cold air blew across his face, and he had a strong sense of someone in the room. No one was visible. The window curtains bulged gently in the draught which had been created. In the dim light all the objects in the room were vaguely visible. A faint sound, like a human sigh, trembled on the air. Then the door of the room closed again, not with a crash as might have been expected from the strong draught that was blowing, but quite softly, as if under the restraint of human hands. If a visitor had indeed entered the room, he had left again as silently as he came.

After that, sleep was impossible. His nerves tingled, and his thoughts began to thrash to and fro

in his brain, like wild creatures beating against the bars of a cage.

The days spent in Melrose were relived; each petty vexation was re-enacted. He saw very distinctly his uncle's face, with the heavy pouches under the tired eyes, and heard his voice repeating the last words he had spoken to him—"I am growing old, John,—I've not got out of life what I hoped for. There's a kind of emptiness in it all." A melancholy confession from one who was accounted a successful man.

What had made his uncle's life seem empty in spite of all its apparent success? Wasn't it that he had missed his way, had refused the path of idealism? For every man there was some one thing he wanted to do more than any other; if that was not accomplished, life was empty. Wasn't the whole secret of human happiness the dedication to impersonal aims —the secret of human misery the expenditure of all the powers of life on aims which had their end in self? The war had revealed that truth to millions of men, but his uncle was not among them. While these millions were flung forth into great adventures, his uncle's life had done nothing more than continue to revolve on the pivot of contented egoism.

From that he went on to think of the effects of the war upon the great masses of men. What had the war done for the world after all? It had defeated the diabolic designs of Germany, but that was a negative result. To crush an evil is not the same thing as to create a good. Had the war given birth to any distinctly new conceptions of life? Was there any sign

that it had set in motion processes which would bring about any authentic transformation of society?

It was undoubtedly a great gain that multitudes of men had proved themselves capable of responding to high ideals of liberty and justice; but now that the fierce wind of war had ceased to blow would not this divine fire sink down again, and be smothered in the aims of materialism? Quite visibly America was fast slipping back into old modes of thought and life. The same thing was true of Britain and France, though the process was less rapid with them, because the agony had been more intense and the sacrifice more stupendous. Did not the entire history of the past prove that mankind could not maintain itself for long at a great height of idealism, that periods of supreme exertion were followed by periods of stagnation, that after these hours of supreme passion the verdict was usually that of Browning's hunted patriot,

> So with a sullen "All's for best"
> The land seemed sinking into rest.

Of course, there was Bolshevism, but that was a purely iconoclastic force, with no element of genuine social reconstruction in it. A Bolshevist world, if it could be imagined, would be a world from which all the higher lights had disappeared. It would be a world where the hunger of the belly was the one incentive to live, displacing the nobler hungers of the spirit. Mankind would never tolerate such a world. Rather than tolerate it every civilised nation would arm itself afresh to crush it, for its threat to human

happiness and progress was much more menacing than German Kultur had ever been.

And there was Foley's dream of a Republic of Soldiers; but was it not equally impracticable? No doubt it would be a fine thing if the world could rid itself of the politicians. In every country they had shown themselves incapable of governing. They had been pushed on by public opinion, they had never led it. Many of them had made the war a fine opportunity for self-advancement. They had been frantically engaged in scrambling for office while their fellows were dying. They were not likely to abdicate in favour of soldiers; and they were too strongly entrenched behind a suppliant press, too well armed with all the means for corruption by which power is served, to be dislodged.

Surely, if anything affirmed the manifest condemnation of the politicians, it was their behaviour at the Peace Conference. What ideas had they brought with them but the ancient idea of bargaining, with the cunning and the strategy of horse-dealers at a county fair, each to get his own end? The soldiers, who had won the war, had had little to say. They had been overruled by the bargainers, who could see no duty beyond that of inflicting indemnities, partitioning Colonies, and drawing up paper demarcations between jealous countries. It hardly seemed worth while to have sacrificed millions of human lives for this result.

The League of Nations?—Yes, that ideal had been born at the Peace Conference, no doubt, and it was a noble ideal. But it was not new. It was as old as the

Roman Empire. Its very constitution might be found in documents drawn up centuries ago. It was so plain a short-cut to human happiness, that one asked why it had not been taken long ago? And the answer was obvious; it had never had behind it the real consent of mankind. Before a real League of peace was possible there must be a change of heart in mankind. Until then, it was nothing better than a paper league, which would be torn up the moment men were disappointed in its results, tired of its tyranny, or strong enough to defy it.

"No, no," he said to himself, "here's the truth as I see it. We want a new faith to inspire mankind and we haven't got it. All things are possible to him that believeth—but we don't believe. We want a new Mahomet—a Paul—some flaming leader—a man who can create belief because he believes. We've come to our new day, and we haven't any new creed that fits its opportunities."

He wished Caldwell was awake—he would have liked to pour out all his troubled thoughts to him. But the house was deeply quiet; the only sound was the faint stirring of the breeze in the leaves of the elm outside the open window. He rose, and looked out on the empty street. The first pallor of dawn was in the sky. High in the zenith there spread a slow effusion of rosy colour. His mind grew calmer as he watched that immemorial spectacle. From its unhurried progress he drew a parable of comfort. Was he not too hasty in expecting vast changes in man-

kind? Or, again, might not such changes be nearer than he knew?

Beside the window was a bookcase. He drew from it a book at random. It was a collection of letters written by Wendell Phillips. His eye fell on one written in 1854, in which Phillips said, "The government has fallen completely into the hands of the slave power. We are beaten. There's no hope. The future seems to unfold a vast slave-empire, united with Brazil and darkening the whole west. I hope I may be a false prophet, but the sky was never so dark."

And seven years later came the Civil War, and with it the abolition of slavery. The night which he thought eternal ended suddenly, and a new day of liberty came with healing in its wings for the enslaved.

The letter was a striking instance of the futility of prophecy. Might not he be just as wrong in his reading of the signs of the times? Might not the new Mahomet, the new Paul, be already on his way, with the world's new dawn of faith marching at his back?

A telegraph boy, on a bicycle, was riding slowly up the street, scanning the houses. He stopped at the gate of Caldwell's home. Chalmers went down stairs softly, and opened the door to him.

"It's for Captain Chalmers," he said.

Chalmers opened it. It read: *"My father died suddenly this evening. Come at once."*

The boy took his receipt for the telegram, and went off down the road, whistling vigorously "Over There."

"Ah, so it was he who came to me in the night," thought Chalmers.

He went back to his room, entering it with a thrill of awe. On his way to God the spirit of Hugh Challoner had stopped there for an instant.

He packed his bag in haste, roused Baldy and left with him a message for Caldwell. The dawn was still young when he got into the train for Melrose.

CHAPTER VII

REQUIESCAT

I

HUGH CHALLONER had died in his sleep. He had played golf on Sunday morning. In the afternoon he had gone a short motor ride with Mary, leaving her at the Smithsons' for dinner. He had come back about six o'clock, dined alone, and spent the rest of the evening in his library, busying himself over papers and documents relating to his private affairs. About eleven o'clock he had gone to his room, and was not seen alive again. His valet was the last person who saw him. It was Challoner's practice to read himself to sleep; but on this night he said to the valet, "You may turn the lights out, Charles. I'm tired—I suppose it's the golf—I think I shall sleep well to-night." An hour later the man remembered that he had not put beside his master's bed a sleeping mixture which he sometimes took. He stole into the room on tiptoe to repair the omission. The intense silence of the room struck him as strange. Standing beside the bed, he could hear no sound of breathing. He switched on the little shaded lamp that was on the table at the side of the bed. One glance at the quiet face upon the

white pillow revealed the tragic truth that Challoner was dead. The hour was a few minutes after midnight. The valet was quite sure of the time, for he remembered that he had heard the stable clock strike twelve as he went up the stairs to his master's room.

Such was the story that Chalmers heard on his arrival at Melrose.

Smithson met him at the station. He was so full of genuine kindness and consideration that Chalmers felt a qualm of compunction for the low estimate he had formed of him.

"I had a great respect for your uncle," he said. "We all looked up to him." His voice broke and there were tears in his eyes.

"I knew he hadn't been well for a long time," he continued. "But he never complained. He wasn't that sort of man. He was thorough-bred, you know —the kind that runs till it drops. The doctors say it was heart failure."

"How's Mary?" asked Chalmers.

"She takes it very hard, very hard. She blames herself that she wasn't with him when he died. I tell her that no one could have foreseen what was going to happen. I'm not a great hand at religion, but I kind of believe that dead people aren't so far away but they know what happens after they've gone, and make allowances. You see, I've something of the same kind on my own conscience. When my father was ill they wired me to come home; but I had some business I wanted to finish and didn't go for two days, and then it was too late. I'm afraid we're all selfish

beasts to our parents, without knowing it. But I'm certain my father didn't blame me half as much as I blamed myself. I guess he understood somehow, and was sorrier for me than he was for himself. I told Mary that; I thought it might help her."

"No," thought Chalmers, "you can't apologise to the dead, nor can you atone to them for stinted affections, unjust judgments, the selfish repudiation of their claims which we made in mere gaiety and light-heartedness."

His own conscience was not quite easy when he thought of his uncle. Is the conscience of the most unselfish lover quite at ease when he contrasts the might-have-been, now impossible, with that which is?

"Your uncle was very fond of you," continued Smithson. "He was thinking of you just before he died."

"Was he? How do you know that?"

"Well, there was a letter on his desk addressed to you. He must have been writing it on Sunday evening. I thought you would like to have it, so I brought it with me. I suppose I'd no right to touch it, but I had an idea that someone else might get hold of it —your uncle's lawyer, for instance, whom you didn't want to read it, and so I made bold to take it."

He handed Chalmers the letter.

"That was very kind of you, and I'm grateful," he said.

The automobile rounded the familiar curve of the road and drew up before the silent house. No one appeared on the steps but the butler. "Miss Mary is

in her room, and will not be down for an hour or so. She told me that your room was ready for you on your arrival, Sir," he said.

Smithson drove away, with the promise to be on hand the moment he was needed. The doctors had made their examination and had already left. Chalmers went up the broad staircase, oppressed by a sense of hopeless desolation. Before the door of his uncle's room his feet were arrested. He opened the door softly and looked in. The windows, half darkened, were wide open, and through them came the twittering of birds, the sound of the wind in the trees, and the distant clatter of a mowing machine on the lower lawns—the ironical reminders of the general movement of life which went on unaltered by the disappearance of man's trivial presence from the large theatre of the world's secular drama.

Upon the white bed lay Hugh Challoner. The mysterious alchemy of death had already changed him. The pouches under the closed eyes had disappeared, the lines on the high forehead were smoothed out, the general contour of the face was rounded in a new youth. Death had brought out all the fineness of the face, the distinction, the look of breeding, and had added to it a kind of gentle hauteur. Looking at it, in its unassailable pride and peace, there came to Chalmers' memory, Shakespeare's moving lament for Duncan—

> "After life's fitful fever he sleeps well;
> Treason has done his worst: nor steel nor poison,
> Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing
> Can touch him further."

He stooped to the cold brow and kissed it. Then he left the death chamber with bowed head, and went to his own room. There he read his uncle's last letter.

"Ever since you left us," it began abruptly, "I have wished that we could have had a more intimate opportunity for conversation than was afforded us. There were many things which I wished to say to you, but a foolish reticence prevented me. I realise now that perhaps after all I can better say them with my pen. I don't promise myself that even when I have written them I shall mail my letter to you: that will depend on my mood. But at all events I will write them, as a relief to my own mind, if nothing else.

"First, as regarded my own life, which in the nature of things is now drawing to a close. I will frankly confess that I am not satisfied with it. The conviction grows upon me that I have mismanaged it. I have certainly not obtained the things I most desired, and therefore am not satisfied with the things I have obtained. It is too late now to alter matters. The groove of habit is too deep. But, in thinking of you, I have asked myself, do I really want you to live a life like mine? Frankly I do not, though I spoke to you as if I did. I see now that the only valid hope a man has of happiness is to follow faithfully the bent of his own nature. It does not much matter what a man does or becomes; if he moves according to the real bias of his own nature, he will be happy, even though it be as a tinker or a gipsy, and if he doesn't he will be unhappy. I don't quite know what the bias of your nature is, and perhaps you don't know

yourself; but whatever it is, you should follow it. I've no doubt about that. Therefore I release you from any responsibility you may have felt to obey my wishes in entering my firm. I was wrong in urging it. You will be acting rightly in refusing it.

"I depart from the personal character of this note for a moment to make a general observation. The chief defect of our American civilisation, as I see it, in this hour of late wisdom, is that it does not develop variety of type. Its entire pressure is directed towards uniformity. It is not elastic enough—therefore it has no room for a true individualism. The chances are that it will go further in this direction in the future than in the past. We shall have a paternalism, growing more and more intolerant, interfering with free development at every point, enacting sumptuary laws of all kinds, directing at last, with inquisitorial vigilance, not only how a man should live as a citizen, but what he should eat and drink, how he shall dress and employ himself as a private individual. I won't stress this point, with which perhaps you will disagree; all I am concerned in saying is that I would rather see America free than prosperous, and that those who have a strong instinct for freedom must be strong to follow it, if the future is not to drift toward a barren conformity of life and opinion.

"The second thing I have to say is concerning Mary. I have expressed the hope that you might marry her. I have altered my view, and now say, positively, I hope you will not. I say this because I now realise that Mary is by nature a conformist

—one who will always do what the majority do —and you are by nature a non-conformist. It goes without saying that I love her deeply. After all, we love each other by instinct, and not for the sake of qualities. I can love her deeply, and yet I am not blind to a certain pliancy to convention in her.

"If I thought you could mould her to your own type, I would say marry her by all means. But I don't believe you could. If a man is to be happy in marriage he must discover a woman who is absolutely sympathetic to his own type; if she is not, he will never change her, and nothing but unhappiness will result from the effort to do so. The variation between them is likelier to widen with time than to diminish. The one supremely wise act of my life was my marriage, for I found a woman who responded at all points to what was best in myself. It is the memory of my own perfect happiness that leads me now to warn you—that leads me, in fact, to recognise the unwisdom of my expressed desire that you should marry Mary.

"There is one other matter on which my mind is somewhat troubled. I have always assumed, especially since you went to the war, that you would marry Mary. I therefore was satisfied to leave all my fortune to her, in the belief that you would share it. With the collapse of that assumption I realise that I must make a new disposition of my possessions. I have therefore drawn up a new codicil to my will, a draft of which I enclose, in which one-third of my fortune will go to you, and two-thirds to Mary. You

will find also that your own modest patrimony has been increased by careful investment, so that you will have a sufficient income from these two sources to be independent. I wish I had made these arrangements earlier, but it was not until you left me a few days ago that I arrived at the definite conclusion that you and Mary were unsuited for each other. I shall see my lawyer early to-morrow—Monday—and complete this business.

"I think this covers all I wish to say. I will not re-read what I have written, for fear I should discover some scruple in myself which would lead me to destroy the letter. I have always found it difficult to express my deepest feelings, and the habit of reticence has grown upon me. So I will let my words stand, just as they have come from my heart. I will only add that I sincerely love you, and pray that God may bless you. HUGH CHALLONER."

Folded by itself in the long envelope was the proposed codicil to the will.

"Well, thank God, that was never executed," thought Chalmers. "If it had been I should have felt that I had robbed Mary. And what a lucky chance that no one knows about it but myself."

He was about to destroy it, when his eye was attracted by what appeared at first to be some pencilled figures on the back of the paper. Looking more closely he recognised Greek lettering—Αδην δεχων. —— Then followed words which were evidently a translation of the incompleted Greek sentence. "Having death for my friend, I do not tremble at shadows."

His eyes filled with tears as he read the words, written long ago by some unknown Greek who had doubtless experienced the worst vicissitudes of life, and had known also how to turn their edge by the hope of the long repose of death. Had this been Hugh Challoner's supreme consolation as he sat at his desk, reviewing for the last time the nature of his life?

He folded the paper and put it carefully away in his wallet. For the sake of that pencilled sentence he must keep it. He saw his uncle's hand writing it, under the shaded light on the library table on that quiet Sabbath night; he saw the shadow of the unseen Consoler falling on it as he wrote. A strong sense came to him of something heroic in his uncle's life, after all. He might have mismanaged his life in missing happiness, but he had known how to bear unhappiness without complaint. He had not trembled at shadows.

And that, rather than the letter itself, seemed to be Hugh Challoner's last message to him. He must learn not to tremble at shadows. He must be strong enough to take hold of life boldly, to follow the real bias of his nature, as Challoner had said, and to count death his friend.

There are many kinds of victory possible to man, but the secret of all victory is the conquest of fear. He drew up the blinds and looked on the familiar landscape, bright in the summer splendour. Across that green valley, and up those purple hills, he thought he saw a bannered host moving, and heard trumpets

calling. They were the spiritual bodyguard of a soul that had not feared.

II

He saw nothing of Mary till the morning of the funeral. She kept her room. When they met at last it was beside the flower-buried casket of Hugh Challoner. She glided into the room, a scarcely recognisable figure, robed in deep crape, out of which rose, like some pale flower, a tortured face, with trembling lips and downcast eyes, beneath which black rings had gathered. She looked so pathetically slight and frail that he felt a great longing to take her in his arms and comfort her. He stood beside her as the solemn burial words were read in the darkened room, and held her unresisting hand in his. He had never felt so truly close to her in spirit as in that moment.

"I wasn't very good to him," she whispered as the service closed. "Do you think he forgave me?"

"He loved you. Love forgives everything, dear," he replied.

"And I haven't been very good to you, have I? Can you forgive me?"

That was the only intimate word which passed between them. She lifted her cold lips to his in a formal passionless kiss. He left the room to enter the waiting automobile that carried him to the grave.

When he returned, the blinds were drawn up, and the afternoon sunshine filled the room, as if in brutal assertion of the fact that the passing of a human crea-

ture from the places that have known him leaves no mark on the eternal order of Nature. The leaf falls from the tree and is forgotten, the eddy sinks in the river, the bubble disappears in the ocean, and the universal life resumes its common courses. The changed room had its curious counterpart in Mary Challoner. The purple patches that grief had made beneath her eyes were still there, but the eyes were now alert, and a touch of fresh colour softly flushed her cheeks.

"Yes," she was saying to Mrs. Smithson, "I feel I couldn't possibly stay here after what has happened. I should like to travel. We could go to Spain, couldn't we?"

The conversation stopped abruptly as Chalmers entered the room.

"We think Mary ought to go away from Melrose," said Mrs. Smithson, half apologetically. "She needs a change, poor child. What would you think of a little party to Spain, Captain Chalmers?"

"I've no doubt you'd find Spain very interesting," he said stiffly.

"Were you ever there?"

"Once. I travelled with a college friend from San Sebastian to Gibraltar."

"You don't say. Won't you please tell us something about it?"

"It's a land where nothing has altered for four hundred years. And if you cross to Tangier, you'll find a land that hasn't altered for two thousand."

He felt ashamed of himself for talking of Spain at such a moment; of planning pleasure journeys in

a room where but two hours before his uncle had lain dead. But he could not well refuse the importunity of Mrs. Smithson and his cousin. And so he spoke of Burgos and Toledo, with their magnificent cathedrals, and Madrid with its arid mediocrity, and Cordoba with its Moorish splendour, and Seville with its thronged and coloured life—and because the places had once moved him to interest and admiration he could not help speaking of them with enthusiasm.

"How delightful!" said Mary. "I'd no idea there was so much to see. And it all seems so new and strange—I'm sure I should enjoy it."

"We would take our motor," said Mrs. Smithson, kindling at the prospect. "I've heard the train service is very bad."

"It was always bad, and since the war I'm told it's much worse," he replied.

"But Spain wasn't in the war, was she?" asked Mrs. Smithson in naïve surprise.

"O, no. Spain has made a great deal of money out of the war. People who've done the same would feel very much at home there, no doubt."

He could not, for the life of him, refrain from this retort. But it passed without any sting of irony over the placid mind of Mrs. Smithson. Mary's eyes, however, flashed indignantly.

"I should think it's something to be very thankful for that there's one place in Europe that hasn't been ruined by the war," she said.

"One place in which the American globe-trotter can resume his occupations without hindrance, without

any inconvenient intrusion of human misery—O, undoubtedly there is much to be thankful for in that."

"I'm not much of a globe-trotter," went on the unperturbed Mrs. Smithson, with her friendliest smile. "But my husband says we've got to go somewhere where we can enjoy life a bit and do as we please, for you can't do it in America, what with the income tax and prohibition and that sort of thing. Why, I heard only last week that Senator Parke's daughter —you know who I mean—she married Mr. Rosebaum—is giving up her house on Fifth Avenue, and intends living in Paris for the rest of her life, because she says she won't be dictated to about what she may eat and drink. And I know she gave nearly half a million to war work and the Red Cross, and didn't grudge it, either."

"I assure you the wine in Spain is very bad," said Chalmers with a sardonic smile.

"Is it? Well, that won't matter, you know, because we shall take our own, of course. There's a wine called Paul Rogers which my husband particularly likes, and I'm sure he wouldn't like to travel without it."

A little flicker of amusement in Chalmers' eyes, a flush of embarrassment on Mary's face, warned Mrs. Smithson of some unsuspected error in her terms.

"Why, bless me, I haven't said anything improper, have I?" she asked.

"O, dear no," answered Chalmers. "The wine you name is a most excellent wine, and I'm not surprised it is appreciated."

"Well, I'm never very sure about the names of these foreign things," she said simply. "They're new to me, and I have to learn them. But do tell me something more about Spain. Perhaps you would come, too, Captain Chalmers. I'm sure that would be delightful, for you could tell us just where to go and what to see."

"No, I couldn't do that, Mrs. Smithson. But if I can help you with any information I shall be most happy to do so. And I quite agree it would be the best possible thing for Mary to get away from Melrose, which is now a place of sad memories for us all."

"Thank you," said Mary quietly. And there was a genuine note of pain in her voice as she added: "I couldn't possibly go on living here for the present. It would be too—sad. You don't blame me for wishing to go, do you, John?"

"I have no right to blame you, and certainly I have no wish, Mary. Go by all means, and wherever you go, may God be kind to you."

He did not know as he spoke the words that they were a valediction. In that hour Mary Challoner passed out of his life, and he was glad to recollect in after years that his last words to her were kind words. I know little of her subsequent history, beyond the bare facts that she went to Spain, where she met and married a certain Count Miraflores, who had large but encumbered estates in the neighbourhood of Cordoba.

CHAPTER VIII

THE UNDER-DOG

I

THE strong emotions which had shaken his life had produced in him a condition of lassitude, which was both mental and physical. He began to be aware that he had put a strain upon his strength, which he was ill able to bear. A craving for solitude began to possess him. He was tired of thinking, tired of grappling with problems that were too great for him.

His uncle's death, his alienation from Mary, had left him solitary. It appeared to him that he was the most friendless man in America. Even Caldwell's companionship had become unattractive to him. He was aware of something cold and hard in Caldwell's mind, a clear academic brilliance which spent itself on views, opinions, theories. And he was tired of the endless discussion of views and opinions because it led to nothing definite.

He found the same lack of definition in the daily papers which he had read with avidity ever since his return. They were full of excellent articles on current events, but they lacked any real synthesis. No one appeared to grasp the general situation in a large

way. They all talked glibly of new eras, the reconstruction of the world and so forth, but none had a workable plan to present. And the facts they reported were profoundly disconcerting and contradictory. It was clear that a spirit of discontent was general. While idealists walked with their heads in the air, prophesying a golden age, maimed soldiers limped along the pavements selling tapes and buttons. (In one town adjacent to New York more than sixty peddlers' licenses had been applied for by returning soldiers.) And there were all sorts of army scandals coming to light, stories of arrears of pay, of postal and hospital negligence, of bribes taken by doctors and officers, of work refused to soldiers, and, in some cases, even of contempt for their claims to consideration. Chalmers wearied himself in puzzling over these signs of the times, and in wondering what they portended.

And then there was Claire Gunnison.

His first instinct was to fly to her on the day he left Melrose after his uncle's funeral. He had promised to meet her, and he knew that she was expecting him. But in his present mood he shrank from meeting her. What was he to say to her? He did not know. He did not wish to meet her as a beggar for her sympathy. His pride shrank from that. He knew perfectly well that when he did meet her the meeting would be decisive. They could not maintain the control imposed by platonic friendship. They must either draw nearer to each other or drift further apart. His uncle's warning words rang in his mind,

that the entire happiness of a man's life depended on finding a woman absolutely sympathetic to all that was finest in himself. Could he be sure of that absolute affinity? If he went to her now, beaten down by mental and physical lassitude, would he not be only too likely to mistake an emotional sympathy for this real affinity of nature? No; when he went to her, it must be in his strength and not his weakness. His giving must match her own.

Of course he might lose her by delay. There was always that chance, but he did not attach much importance to it, because he had tacitly accepted her fatalistic view of life. The lines of their lives had crossed twice; if it was so ordered by the great designer of human destinies, they would cross again. Nothing could hurry that process and nothing could postpone it.

Late at night he wandered into Sixty-seventh Street and found her home. A light burned in a second floor window; he pictured her sitting there by a shaded lamp, reading; putting her book down as she caught the echo of a footfall on the street, then leaning back against the cushions of her chair, quietly dreaming, recalling sweet and fugitive memories, silently waiting—waiting. Waiting without anxiety, calmly, confidently. Had she not said that though he and she should start from the utmost ends of the earth they would come face to face at last, if it was so ordered? He looked down the dark length of the street. He knew it well. The house at the north corner was the house in which his uncle had lived before he built

the house at Melrose for Emily Challoner. As a boy, joyfully released from school, he had run up those steps; he could see very clearly the dim old-fashioned room, with its heavy walnut furniture, and his Aunt coming towards him with outstretched arms of welcome. It was strange that Claire Gunnison was living in the same street. He had not thought of that before. Might not this also be an augury that her line of life and his were bound to meet, that forces which neither could exactly define were really pushing them together—the secret tides of destiny, which we, in our ignorance, call events and accidents?

As he walked back to his hotel, along Fifth Avenue, something in the dim shapes of trees and rock in Central Park evoked a memory of his boyhood. They bore a curious resemblance to a line of shore, piled against the polished surface of the street, which gleamed with a newly fallen shower. A shore line and the gleam of water—and there came instantly to his recollection a lonely stretch of coast on Long Island where as a child he had spent many happy hours. Emily Challoner, always eager to forsake New York, had discovered it. Its solitude, which others found a disadvantage, was to her its great attraction.

He saw it very plainly—sand-dunes, rising from a level beach, a few simple cottages, a long white road running back through the marshes for half a mile to an old frame house, standing in a thick grove of trees, and a garden full of flowers. It was a true Colonial house, as he remembered it, with a wide plain panelled

hall, low-pitched rooms, a dining-room with a brick floor and a vast brick fire-place, where a wood fire burned, over which still hung upon an iron bar an iron caldron, a relic of the age in which the house was built. It had been an inn, and then a private school. When Emily Challoner took a lease on it, she expended on it her talent for restoration. She repapered the rooms with papers of the Colonial times—one he remembered well, a landscape paper, which gave one the sense of sitting out of doors. She filled it with Colonial furniture, and hung upon the walls old samplers and narrow mirrors and one or two quaint stiff portraits of the time of Washington. And there, for a time, she spent her summers, delighting in the severe simplicity of the old house, through whose open windows the sharp sea-air blew, and the sound of the sea passed like the low harmony of an old song of which the ear never tired. The Three Cups Inn —yes, that was what it had been called, in the days when old fishermen came out of the blowing night, and sat beside the blazing hearth, and the name had always stuck to it. And, suddenly, the thought came to Chalmers, why not go there and rest? There, if anywhere, was solitude, and the kind of memory, too, which sweetened solitude, and made it habitable.

When he reached his hotel, Baldy met him, assiduous, cheerful, anxious to please; and it struck him that probably Baldy was the best friend he had in all this populated loneliness of New York. Baldy knew him as no one else did; he had seen him in all his moods, he had been with him when long and horrible

discomforts set the nerves on edge, in hours of supreme exaltation, in hours of unconquerable depression; he knew the best and worst of him. A sudden warmth filled his heart as he thought of Baldy's humble devotion and a conviction seized him that he must never again allow himself to part from him. Such fidelity as his was a rare and beautiful thing. Beneath all that was common and foolish in the man this fidelity lay, like a precious deposit, a vein of purest gold.

"Baldy," he said, as the little man unlaced his long riding boots, "I'm thinking of leaving New York for a time. What would you say to a little journey into the country?"

"I'd be very glad to go, sir. I'm tired of walking pavements, and it'd be fine to feel the clean earth under one's feet again."

"So you don't like New York, eh?"

"I like some of it well enough, sir. There's the picture shows. They're a bit of all right, except when they do war pictures."

"What's wrong with the war pictures, Baldy?"

"Those that is all right makes me want to go back, and those that isn't makes me mad. I don't like seeing a chap like Charlie Chaplin pretend he's a soldier, in a fake trench—him as took good care he didn't come nigh nor by a real trench. It kind of makes me sick, so that I can't laugh. I feel like throwing things at him."

"And what else is wrong in New York, Baldy?"

"There's too many people, sir, an' they all look so

damn satisfied, if you'll 'scuse me saying it. An' all these big buildings, sir, they make you feel as if you was crawling at the bottom of a drain, and couldn't get out. They make you feel as if you was a inseck and not a man."

"Well, Baldy, what would you say to a month in a lonely house beside the sea?"

"I'd like that fine, sir. I've never seen the sea, 'xcept going and coming on it, and that don't count. What sort of place is it, if I might be so bold as to ask? Would there be many servants in it, sir?"

"There'd be no one but ourselves, Baldy. You'd have to cook, and do everything there was to be done."

"Well, I can cook—you know that, sir. I learned in a lumber-camp, where if I didn't do things right they pitched their boots at me. It'd be like camping again, wouldn't it?"

"Something like it. Well, I'll see about it to-morrow, Baldy. And I'll promise you I won't throw my boots at you, if your omelets aren't good."

"I never was very good at omelets, I know," said Baldy, with a contrite air. "But then look at the eggs them Frenchies gave me. You could hear the chickens talkin' in them. You give me fresh eggs, sir, an' I'll be bound you won't have no cause to complain."

"I don't think I ever did complain, did I?"

"No, you didn't. But I see you eating 'em as if they was medicine, and dropping some of 'em in the mud when you thought I wasn't looking. Particularly one morning when we was at Arras. But the next

morning things was different, for in the meantime I'd held that Frenchy's head under the pump for 'arf an 'our, and he told me where he kep' his good eggs."

"So that's the way you looked after my grub, was it, Baldy?"

"That were one way, an' a pretty good way, too, for it answered all right."

Chalmers laughed; it was so like Baldy to have done a thing like this. He remembered very well the day when Baldy had arrived in the lines, a forlorn object, whose company was apparently desired by no one. Something in his face attracted Chalmers—a whimsical look, like that of a child detected in a fault, a sort of shamefaced yet laughing defiance, a challenging cheerfulness under difficulties. And because Chalmers' batman had been wounded the day before and had gone to the base hospital, he took on Baldy in his place, but with considerable doubt as to the wisdom of his choice. The chief complaint made against Baldy had been insubordination, which had really meant nothing more than a boyish desire for private adventures, and an unwillingness to be unjustly strafed. Chalmers discovered immediately that the one key which unlocked the best qualities of Baldy's nature was to treat him as a reasonable creature who might be trusted. He took care to give him no order that was not reasonable, but to insist firmly that any order so given must be obeyed absolutely. His thirst for private adventures, especially the collection of "souvenirs" from dead Germans, often gathered under shell-fire, still continued, but Chal-

mers was as conveniently blind to these episodes as he could be. The result of this treatment was the development of a spirit of adoring loyalty in Baldy. There was no peril he would not share with Chalmers, no risk that he would not incur to serve his lightest wish. In that confused and friendless life of his, which had begun in Barnardo's Homes, developed on Canadian wheat-farms and lumber-camps, always exposed to hardship and often to brutality, Chalmers was the first man who had made him feel human. The bond thus created lay deep beneath all surface differences of rank and education, and it had been toughened by the strain of common suffering and peril. It was little wonder that in this hour of loneliness Chalmers felt that the best friend he had in New York was this orphan of a London slum. Many a man to whom life has given lavish gifts of popularity and esteem might search the store-house of his wealth without discovering any friendship so fine in quality as this humble affection which Baldy had for Chalmers.

"Well," continued Chalmers, "I think I'm about as tired of New York as you are, Baldy, though for different reasons. So to-morrow I'll see if I can get this house I spoke of. I used to know it when I was a boy, and I'd like to see it again."

"An' I'm to go with you, sir?"

"Certainly. I wouldn't think of going without you."

Baldy's face lit up with pleasure.

"It'll be like old times to go camping again," he

said. And he added his formula of allegiance, "I'll serve you faithful, sir. I always did, and I always will."

II

Chalmers found no difficulty in arranging for a temporary occupancy of the Three Cups Inn. The old house was too remote to be easily let; the popular tide flowed toward the great hostelries and elaborate cottages which had arisen two to three miles northward. A sea-fog was blowing in on the night when he took possession, and the house bore a strange resemblance to a stranded ship, some high-pooped galleon, left derelict and solitary on the grey marshes. He entered it nevertheless with a sense of home-coming. It was not altered much since the days when he had been taken there as a child. The quaint corner cupboards, with their bits of old pewter and china, were there, as Emily Challoner had left them; the landscape paper still opened up vistas of impossible seas and hills crowned with temples, and on the wide brick hearth a fire of sea-wood burned, throwing off little jets of blue and lavender flame. He came out of the fog as two generations earlier the fishermen had come out of the blowing night, shaking the sea water from their oil-skin capes, to find brief respite from the daily battle of their lives in the warm comfort of the old low-pitched rooms.

He slept that night as he had not slept since he left the hospital. The sea-wind, moist with fog and salt, stirred the thin chintz curtains of the windows, and

the distant fall of waves on the shore filled the room, like the beating of a pulse. He woke next morning to a world recreated. Birds were singing in the elms, a sky of blue fire quivered with a million separate flashes of joyous light, and half a mile away was spread the long azure ribbon of the sea. His spirits rose to greet the morning freshness. He felt as though he had recaptured his boyhood, and a ridiculous notion seized him that presently he would find himself trotting through the marshes, with his hand in Emily Challoner's, to spend long hours on the beach in building sand-castles and casual bathing.

His first day in the Three Cups was pure Nirvana. He had no wish to read, to think, to stray far from the great elms that cast a wide shadow on the green lawn. He was content to sit entirely still, to hear the hum of bees, to watch the antics of a grey squirrel in the branches of the elms, to open his lungs for long draughts of the good sea air. For the first time he realised how life had bruised and hurt him in the last four years. And for the first time he realised his recovered freedom. He was no longer a man under authority, with no voice in the disposition of his own life. There was no one to give him orders, and no responding urgency in himself to obey them. For the first time he had laid aside his uniform, and dressed himself in an old suit of serviceable flannels. They were the symbols of a great emancipation. He had been a man bought and paid for; once more he was miraculously his own man.

Baldy took care of him with the patient assiduity

of an old nurse. He had justified his skill with omelets. Early in the day he had gone off to Hampton and had returned laden with provisions.

"Reminds one of old days," he said with a grin.

But the old days seemed remote as a life once lived and endured on another plane of being to Chalmers, as he sat, idly dreaming in the shadow of the elms.

That night he slept again the untroubled sleep of a child, and the morning once more came in gold and azure. But this second morning brought a little restless wave of thought like the ripple of a dropped stone in placid water. To still that restlessness he went off to the beach alone, and spent the morning swimming. A fresh breeze was blowing, and the long Atlantic rollers came in stately procession, foam-topped, like the white manes of advancing cavalry. He dived through them, and swam far out to sea, rejoicing in his strength. That night he slept again in deep contentment, but when he woke next morning the wave of restless thought in his mind had become perceptibly stronger. Had he not come there to think out the problems of his life? Well, he must begin to do it. It would never do just to live——

Yet why not? Was there any higher wisdom possible to man than just to live, to be content with the act and bliss of living? Men thought too much. They thought until thought became a malady. They thought so much that they forgot to live. What more could man ask of the Powers but health and a day? Had not some wise writer said that such a possession made the pomp of empires ridiculous? Of

course some men had to think for the race—scholars and inventors, for example, on whom, in a sense, human progress depended. But had the world really progressed in any real way? The wise Greeks knew as much of human life as any men have ever known, and as for man's religious knowledge, was it not all based on words uttered two thousand years ago by a Jewish Carpenter?

And there was another thing: men who insisted on thinking for themselves had almost always thought wrongly. They had believed themselves superior, and naturally had sought to inflict their superiority on others. If Alexander hadn't thought himself superior, if Bonaparte hadn't thought so proudly of his destiny, if the Kaiser hadn't maddened his narrow brain with thinking too much of himself and the thing he called Kultur, how much misery and horror the world would have been spared! And the same thing applied to men like the great Inquisitors—Calvin as well as Torquemada—who became bigots by too much thinking, and sought to force all mankind into a conformity with their opinions. If it came to a question of human happiness, the world would have been much happier if such men had never lived. Or if they had lived humbly, they themselves would have been happier. Bonaparte might have lived and died in great content as a Corsican lawyer; he made a poor bargain when he bought splendour at the price of St. Helena. The Kaiser might have been a happy man if he had lived on his estates, in a plain round of

simple pleasures and duties, and had never been afflicted with the bacillus of megalomania.

To refuse the urgency of individual thinking, and just live, must be a wiser plan of living than he suspected since it was the plan most men adopted. Those weather-worn fishermen who came to the Three Cups generations ago, pleased with a little respite from the rigours of the sea, thankful for a mug of beer and a blazing fire, were probably much happier than he was. Their code of life was so simple that it didn't need to be thought out—it was an affair of instinct. They lived as wise children, taking no thought for the morrow, and was there not a certain divine authority for such a method of life?

As he looked at those green marshes, through which the water-ways ran like blue veins, at the hedges which were beautiful with wild roses, and the little pastures where cows fed, and the simple houses of the fishermen, like brown nests pushed into the hollows of the sand dunes, and the old paths beside the waterways, where human feet had travelled for a century or more, he wondered sadly why men so persistently refused the happiness that lay in humble things. Well, was he willing to accept it? In his present mood he was, but—— Why utter that disconcerting "but"? What sense was there in clouding to-day's splendour with the threat of an unknown to-morrow?

That night, under a sky gemmed with innumerable stars, he walked beside the sea, entranced by the mystery and immensity of the scene. The little waves ran up the sands in a white wavering line of foam, a

soft breeze blew out of the heart of the waters, the stars hung reflected in the little pools left by the ebbing tide. A mile away a soft burst of light showed where the new-made town stood, affronting the ancient majesty of things with a spurious gaiety. So all the towns and cities man had built stood amid environing eternities of silence, the mere excrescence of a moment. So man forever walked among things immense, secret, unfathomable; himself utterly insignificant. And yet, in his pride of heart, he actually imagined the universe waiting for his footsteps, a mere theatre, with the stars for foot-lights, especially arranged for him, that on its boards he might play his little part. Was there ever folly so fatuous, so impertinent and so incredible?

In such vague dreams as these, in aimless wanderings along the beach, in a state of almost complete passivity, he passed his days. At last there came a morning when the compulsion to think seized him with a relentless grip. He found himself once more face to face with the problems of his own life. Nirvana was over. And, curiously enough, this awakening came through Baldy.

III

The previous night had been wet and windy, and he and Baldy sat by the sea-wood fire, in a kind of social silence. To pass the time, rather than with any serious intent, he had asked Baldy to tell him something about his life.

"There ain't much to tell," he had replied.

"Well, tell me what there is."

Baldy rubbed the back of his head, and looked embarrassed.

"A gentleman like you, sir, wouldn't be interested in what happened to a man like me. It isn't to be expected."

The words, so humbly uttered, had an unintended sting in them. Here was a man in whose intimate company he had passed the most dramatic years of his life. They had marched together through mud and corruption, slept side by side, shared physical misery and peril, and through all the tests of warfare had matched quality with quality. He had been no braver than Baldy, and had exhibited no finer spirit. Yet it had never occurred to him before to ask Baldy about his own life. He had accepted the man's fidelity as his right. He had accepted the fact of a social gulf between them as inevitable. "A gentleman like you wouldn't be interested in what happened to a man like me"; he had certainly given cause for such a conclusion, and compunction seized him as he recollected it.

"You mustn't think that," he said gently. "Believe me, I'm greatly interested in you, Baldy. I owe you a great deal."

"I've never thought of it that way," was the reply. "Seems to me, 'tis all the other way about. You were the first man as ever give me a chance, sir."

"Not the first, surely, Baldy."

"The first as I can recolleck. Do you know the

Old Kent Road in London, sir? Well, there's a place down there they used to call the Mint, near Long Lane it is, and it were there I was born. My father worked in a tannery down Bermondsey way, until one winter when there wasn't any more work for him, and then he became a thief. They were mostly thieves in the Mint, and not ashamed of it, neither. I've heard of a 'undred a fifty of 'em at a supper given by a police-court missionary, an' all of 'em as pleased with themselves as though they'd been millionaires. But the time came when father got lagged, and that was the last I saw of father. Mother died while he was in prison, and I was took away to Dr. Barnardo's Homes. After that they sent me to Canada, an' I was put to work upon a farm out beyond Winnipeg. There I was knocked about a good bit, for I found Barnardo boys weren't thought much of by anybody. One day they sent me up to put new shingles on the roof of a barn, and they thought it a good joke to pepper me with bird-shot, when I was a stoopin' down nailing on them blamed shingles. That was too much for me, and so I run away. After that I wandered up and down, in all sorts of places, sometimes working, sometimes loafing—but this I will say for myself, I kep' honest. You see I remembered father, and I was mortal afraid of being a thief. I worked on the railway, and on farms at harvests, and in lumber-camps in the winter, and once I tried serving in a saloon, but I was more afraid of that than thieving, because I knew if once the drink got a hold of me, it would be all up. That's about all I recolleck—until

the War came, and then I said, 'Here's your chance,' and I went over with the first lot."

"And what about the army, Baldy?"

"Well, I liked the fightin' first-rate, but somehow I didn't like the other part of it. There was too much orderin' about, and bein' strafed for nothin' in particular. I'd lived free, and done as I liked too long, I suppose."

"How old are you, Baldy?"

"Do you mean my military age or my civil age, sir?"

"Why, your real age, of course."

"Well, my civil age is forty-one, but my military age is thirty. At least, that were what I told 'em when I joined up, and they didn't contradict me."

This piece of information was communicated with an insinuating grin.

"And you never thought of settling down?"

"Marryin', you mean, I suppose, sir? Well there was a girl once, but she died. After that I didn't seem to care much what happened to me."

"And in all those years, no one gave you a helping hand, Baldy?"

"Helpin' hands aren't as frequent as some folks think they are. I used to hear a lot about it when I was a boy at Barnardo's. You'd think from what they said, the world was full o' helpin' hands. But when I got away from Barnardo's I found most men wanted all the hands they had to help themselves an' expected you to do the same. No, sir, you was the

first as ever truly helped me. It's twenty-five years since I left Barnardo's, an' you are the first."

There were other details in Baldy's simple Iliad that Chalmers drew from him by degrees as they talked by the fire that night. He had once saved a man's life on a lumber raft in the Fraser River, and had paid the price of his heroism with two months in hospital with pneumonia. He had been fireman on a leaking steamer that had struck a reef and gone down at the entrance to the harbour of Prince Rupert, and had escaped death only by the coolness of his courage. Life had been for him a long adventure, always encountered with calm resourcefulness and high spirits. He claimed no merit for these qualities. All that he had done and been he regarded as commonplace, part of the day's work. He made no complaint that he had found the world unfriendly. A poor man, whose birthplace was the Mint, and whose father was a thief, was not entitled to much consideration. But at the end of his recital, he said one thing that Chalmers found infinitely pathetic.

"There's lots of chaps like me," he said. "Do you really think, sir, the world's going to be any better for them now that the war's over?"

The question, with its implied accusation, sank deep into Chalmers' mind. It was not asked in bitterness; there was no intention of accusation in it. It was simply the wistful appeal of the under-dog, to whom the world had been uniformly unkind.

Chalmers looked at Baldy with a new comprehension, and tried to realise his character and history.

It seemed a thing beautiful and almost miraculous that under circumstances so hostile he had maintained a courageous temper, that he had remained sweet-natured and genial and unselfish. He had made no exorbitant demand upon the world, and how cheerfully he had received the little that was given! And he was not without abilities, too. He had a mind that was shrewd, bold, and, within the narrow limits set for it, clear-sighted. He was not wholly illiterate. He had picked up in early life, probably in the Barnardo Homes, a confused idea of the value of books; he read Kipling's tales with interest, delighted in the poetry of Robert Service, and carried with him a tattered copy of Burns' poems, although he made a sad hash of the Scots dialect, much of which was unintelligible to him. A vision came to Chalmers of Baldy reading Burns with intent eyes by the fire of lumber camps, stimulated by the manly intelligence and robust independence of the inspired ploughman, who has spoken for the poor and the oppressed in ringing words which no other poet has ever used. By the camp-fires in France Chalmers had often seen him draw the tattered leather-bound copy of Burns from his soiled tunic, and read with manifest delight the poems that spoke so sweetly of hearth-side affections and passionate love which he had never known. And, remembering these things, Chalmers was pierced with a poignant sense of the unjust inequalities of human life. If he had been born in the Mint would he have made as much of his life as Baldy had? If Baldy had been born in America and educated at Yale,

would not he have profited by his opportunity in a degree at least equal to that attained by men like Chalmers?

Judged and measured from this point of view, Chalmers realised that this child of a London slum appeared at all points superior to himself. He had fought a harder battle with poorer weapons. He had faced life almost unarmed, and that he had survived at all was marvellous.

Was the world going to be any better, any kinder or juster to the under-dog, now that the war was over?

There were not many signs that pointed that way, a great many that pointed in an opposite direction. One thing that he saw quite plainly, as he considered the history of Baldy, was that the old system of social injustice was doomed. To permit the Mint, and places like the Mint, where neglected human misery festered into crime, and to set up against it, as the sole counteracting force, Barnardo's Homes, was an absurdity, only made tolerable by its good intention. Injustice tempered by philanthropy was merely to anoint with a narcotic balm a wound that needed surgery. And the whole future of civilisation lay in the answer to the question whether the world was at last prepared to organise society upon a base of equal justice which made philanthropy unnecessary.

"The world's not been very kind to you, Baldy, has it?" he said.

"O, I'm not complainin'," was the answer. "I've managed to get along better than some. But there's a good many as is complainin'. I used to hear 'em

talkin' in the trenches, and I've heard lots of the Yanks talk since I been in New York."

"What do they say, Baldy?"

"Well, I don't know as I can put it just right, but they've got notions. They don't intend to go back to what they was before the war. They don't see why the rich folk should be the only kind of folk that get a good time. There was a chap with one leg I saw one day going to cross Fifth Avenue, when along come a big limousine with a fat Jew in it, and nearly ran him down. That Jew didn't care—he was muttering to himself, angry-like; he looked like one of these 'ere profiteers. The soldier jumped back on the kerb with his crutches and his one leg, an' I know by the look on his face what he was thinking. He was sayin' to himself, 'That swine has made money by the war, an' I've lost my leg by it; by rights I ought to be ridin' in the limousine, and he ought to be standin' in the gutter.' That's how lots of men feel. An' some day they'll get angry, and then they'll want to take what they think they ought to have, an' they'll take it, too."

"Is that how you feel, Baldy?"

"I won't say I haven't felt it, sir. But I'm not agreein' with that kind of talk. All I'm askin' is a square deal."

"And what would you call a square deal?"

"Just the chance to live decent, an' earn enough money to have a little of what the rich have too much of."

"That's not asking much."

"No, it ain't, but sometimes I think it's a sight more than we're likely to get."

He sat up very straight as he spoke, and into his humorous and kindly blue eyes there came a flash of fanaticism.

"I've starved, an' lived hard, an' done my bit, an' there's those who've suffered a lot more than I've done. They went to the war glad and cheerful, and were fed up with all kind of tosh about savin' the world for democracy. What they want to know now is, what is this blessed world they've saved going to do for them? They ain't goin' back to their old jobs, don't you think it, sir. They ain't goin' to work in mines and factories to give rich swine the chance of riding in limousines. They ain't goin' to be thankful for crusts, when they see folk who didn't suffer by the war, but p'raps made money out of it, gorgin' themselves on rich food and wine. They know they're strong enough, if they act together, to get anything they want. The under-dog's top-dog now, an' they ain't ever goin' to be under-dogs again. Beggin' your pardon, sir, that's what men are sayin', and 'tis only right you should know it."

The flash of fanaticism died out of his eyes as rapidly as it came, and he said with a timid air of deprecation, "I hadn't ought to have said these things to you, sir, and I deserve to be well strafed for sayin' them."

"Do you observe, Baldy, that I'm not wearing my uniform?" said Chalmers. "We're neither of us in the army now, and there's no more 'strafing.' We're

just two men with some hard problems to solve, and I'm not thinking of you as my batman, but as my friend."

"I'm your servant, just the same, an' in spite of what I've said, I've no wish to be anything else, sir."

And into those eyes, which a moment before had blazed so indignantly, came a softness, that was not far removed from tears.

"You're a better man than I am, Gunga Dinn," quoted Chalmers with a smile.

"That's Kipling, isn't it?" said Baldy with a nod of appreciation.

"Yes, it's Kipling. It's also, if I mistake not, God's verdict on the humble."

But that sentiment was a little too abstruse for Baldy, whose religious education consisted only of remote memories of hymns sung on Sundays in the little chapel of the Barnardo Homes. He rose and pushed together the embers of the dying fire. He cleared the table of its glasses, cigar-ashes, and scattered books. He was once more the faithful batman, and he wondered as he drew the curtains over the window against which the summer rain beat, how he had dared to talk to his master as he had.

IV

Through the brief summer night, as Chalmers lay sleepless, he revolved in his mind this conversation with Baldy, until it became an obsession, until it en-

larged itself into a vision of profound and significant world-processes.

There came back to him vividly that vision which he had had long before beside the sea of the shining helmets of an army, horsemen and far-flung banners—the host of the martyrs, the men of Mons and the Marne, the trodden flesh of Flanders' fields reassembled, filing past in solemn pride, carrying their mutilations like crimson badges, like sacrificial decorations, bestowed upon them by the hand of God. And he remembered the message that came to him from those silent lips—"We are the dead, but the cause for which we died is not yet won. Not until justice reigns throughout the earth will that cause be won. Justice for the humblest toiler as well as for the humblest nation——"

He drew up the blind; the rain-clouds had cleared, a sky of moon-washed pearl rimmed the level waters, and again from the sea he saw a host of men emerging, a multitude that climbed endlessly over the rim of the horizon. They marched without elation, with no cry of trumpets to quicken their steps, with no flash of arms, and the banners they carried were dark and drooping. They marched patiently, dejectedly, with bowed heads and heavy feet, and their numbers were beyond counting. Their wounds were not the wounds of battle, exhibited proudly as decorations; they were the scars of life-long drudgery, the Lazarus-sores of long neglect, the calloused mutilations of injustice. For he knew who they were, the army of

the under-dogs—men, like Baldy, to whom life had given no chance.

Strange that he had lived all his years, and had never thought of these! Stranger still that he had received as gospel the lying fiction that all men were created equal, with certain inalienable rights, among which were life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness! What equality was possible between a life started in the purlieus of the Mint and a life like his own, which had inherited comfort and learning and all the finest impulses and restraints of civilisation? Had he once, in all those years, got a true vision of the dread foundations on which society was built? Had he ever taken the trouble to enquire why a narrow section of society should possess all the best in life, and the vast majority of human creatures should stand without, like beggars who see through gilded gates a Paradise which they may not enter? Yet he had assumed, as all his kind assumed, that there was some divine sanction for this disparity. It was the way the world was made. There were top-dogs and under-dogs, and it was not in the nature of the top-dog to enquire very closely into the feelings of the under-dog. And now, it would seem, the under-dog had begun to dispute the rights of the top-dog; he was no longer patient and passive; he was no longer disposed to accept as inevitable and sacrosanct a social disparity which gave everything to the few and nothing to the many.

Baldy had taught him that. In a single hour of human conversation he had learned from Baldy more of the meaning of life than all his preceptors had

taught him. And he knew why; for the first time he had talked with Baldy as a man and not as a servant. He had thrown down the artificial barriers which separated them, to discover in Baldy a human soul, the equal of his own. The equal? Rather the superior, as he himself had acknowledged, when his instinctive tribute had been, "You're a better man than I am, Gunga Dinn."

That a man should be an under-dog through natural incompetence, through vice or weakness, was intelligible. Evolution insisted on that. But it was not intelligible and it was not fair that a man should be an under-dog through the artificial pressure of an unjust strength, selfishly exerted. Evolution insisted on the exact contrary, when it taught the survival of the fittest. To prevent the survival of the fit by the downward pressure of a social and exclusive selfish system was to resist evolution, and, in so far as evolution was a real principle of human life, to defy and repudiate it.

A saying of Caldwell's rang through his mind with reverberating emphasis—"Bolshevism is exasperation at injustice. It is the robbed becoming the robbers."

He could accept no brief for Bolshevism. It was an ugly and terrible thing. It was a distorted Caliban, rising out of the primeval slime, to mock with brutal gibes and wreck with bloody hands all the fair structure of civilisation which man had reared by how many thousand years of agonising effort. But surely a wise man would not be content with merely de-

nouncing and opposing it; he would at least enquire into the causes of so prodigious an effect. Was not Caldwell right when he had declared that every man was content with society as long as he believed that society gave him a fair deal; but that the moment he believed that he was unfairly treated he would treat society unfairly; and, being denied what was justly his, would seize on that to which he had no claim? Was not that precisely what men needed to see, and what no man appeared capable of seeing?

And to what disastrous folly was this unwillingness to see leading mankind!

What was the use of a Peace Conference which settled all kinds of questions, but tacitly ignored Russia? It was like taking out insurances for one's property, while a great conflagration raged, without the least effort to put out the fire! Did the statesmen at the Peace Conference forget that Russia represented one-sixth of the globe and that it was aflame from end to end? Did they suppose that they could go about the boasted business of reconstructing the world, by making their own frontiers safe, while one-sixth of the world was burning? What folly! What stupendous selfishness! And yet that seemed the real position of affairs. No one was wise enough to insist that until Russia was stabilised, no world-peace was possible; and the very nations that had done so much to crush a world-peril were unwilling to lift a hand to curb or destroy a much vaster world-peril.

Quite clearly he saw now what the real problem of the future was—it was the problem of the under-dog.

Until that problem was solved the promise of world-peace was futile. And it must be solved where it had been stated in the most perilous terms—Russia. Was there anything he could do toward such an end? He had once been offered a commission in the little Canadian force which had been dispatched to Siberia. One of his best friends was there, a certain Major Clyde, who had fought with him at Vimy Ridge. He had begged Chalmers to join him; but months had elapsed, and no word had come from him. In the vast silence of the steppes Clyde and his artillery brigade had been swallowed up like a drop in the ocean.

Should he accept this almost forgotten opportunity of service? It would settle many things for him. It would put an end to the torture of thinking, and give him something positive to do. It would restore him to the clean, austere, self-respecting life of the soldier in the field. But an inner voice told him that Russia would not be saved by armed interference. It was the teacher rather than the soldier that Russia needed. It was the teaching of men like Lenine and Trotsky which had ruined Russia. It must be through a truer teaching of liberty, not alone the privilege but the obligations of liberty, that Russia must be saved. If a spiteful anarchist, who had learned hatred of democracy in the squalid tenement houses of New York, could infect the soul of Russia so fatally, could not others, who knew the real value and meaning of democracy touch that soul also, and touch it to finer issues?

His heart glowed a little at the thought; but he was too tired in mind to grasp it with energy.

The dawn was breaking. Over the quiet sea spread a pearly wash of light, and behind it shone the broad golden suffusion of the advancing day.

He knew that sleep was now impossible, and, indeed, the desire for sleep had left him. He went out into the fresh air, and began to walk vigorously toward the sea. The long level stretch of sands allured him, and he strolled on toward Hampton. In the roped-off space of quiet sea a few early bathers were swimming. He sat down, idly watching them. Presently his attention was attracted by one of them, a woman, who swam with singular grace far out to sea, and at last turned back to shore with a long easy breast-stroke. As she neared the shore, and rose upon a green wave, the full sun caught her, and lit up a golden strand of hair which had escaped from her bathing-cap. He looked more eagerly, and then recognition came to him. It was beyond doubt Claire Gunnison. For the third time the line of her life had intersected his.

IX

HEARTS' HAVEN

I

SHE came out of the sea, fresh and rosy as an Aphrodite, new-risen from the foam. The salt-drops, falling from her bare arms, flashed like diamonds in the sun. She stood gazing sea-ward into the heart of that increasing splendour, which seemed to invest her with a prismatic halo, and for the first time Chalmers realised her physical beauty, the exquisite lines and graceful poise of her supple figure. Then she turned quietly to the bath-house, and an aspect of desertion fell upon the shore and sea.

From the little hollow of the sand-dunes where he was standing, Chalmers moved to the road which he knew she must take, and waited for her. He would have liked to arrange his thoughts, to categorise the emotions she aroused, but his emotions ran too swiftly for him. In the end he yielded to them, as a swimmer yields to a strong uplifting tide. He found a new happiness in this passivity. At the heart of this strange happiness lay the sense of submission to a force stronger than that of the individual will. In this unexpected meeting he recognised the compulsion

of converging destinies; the Powers of life and death, who work behind the veils of Time, were busy with him. He yielded to their pressure as clay in the hands of a potter, and he found a peace in yielding.

She came at last. He moved out into the middle of the sandy road, and stood waiting for her. Velvet-backed swallows flashed and twittered in the marshes, a gust of air, fragrant with wild honeysuckle, blew across the road, the measured diapason of the sea beat upon the shore. To his dying day he knew that he would associate these things with Claire. They would be the symbols of her essential interpretation. The Claire he was now to meet was the natural woman, stripped of all disguise—the woman who came up out of the sea with the candid beauty of a human goddess.

She stood before him, startled; he came toward her with outstretched hands.

"You?" she said.

"I was waiting for you," he replied.

No further explanation seemed necessary. She laid her cool hand in his, and so they walked on side by side for a few yards. Then she gently withdrew her hand, and they went on in silence. They felt and acted as though their tryst were planned. It seemed the most natural thing in the world that they should be together in this morning loneliness beside the sea.

A few yards along the road a high-shouldered wooden bridge crossed a stream, fringed deeply with tall reeds, among which the swallows darted. They

poised themselves delicately on the swaying reeds, skimmed in swift flight the surface of the water, flashed to and fro, making intricate patterns on the blue air, in an access of glad and free life. A path ran beside the water; a boat swayed at its moorings; the tide, running out, talked in a low gurgling whisper. Instinctively they turned from the bright sandy road into this reed-banked path. They walked on slowly till they reached a deserted hut, on whose roof the fishermen's nets were drying. There was no sound but the whisper of the water in the reeds. The morning breeze had not begun to blow; the height of the firmament was poised and motionless, without the least cloud, and an immense silence filled the world.

Chalmers was the first to speak.

"After Yale, do you remember, I promised to see you in New York? Did you wonder why I didn't come?"

"I knew the reason. I understood."

"But I did come after all. I walked up and down before your house. There was a light in the second-floor window, and I knew you were there."

"And then?"

"I left New York the next day. I was too tired to meet anyone, even you, Claire. Do you ever feel a great need for silence? That's how I felt. And so I came here."

"I came for the same reason."

She plucked a marsh flower, and began to pull it to pieces with restless fingers. Her face was turned

away from him. Presently she said, "But that wasn't the only reason, was it?"

"No," he said. "There was another."

"Were you afraid to meet me? Was that the reason?"

"Yes, I was afraid. I was afraid of your sympathy. When a man is very lonely he sometimes mistakes sympathy for love. He brings a woman his weakness; she pities him, and her pity is so sweet that he accepts it as a substitute for love. I did not wish that to happen."

She meditated that reply in silence for some minutes.

"I also was afraid," she said in a low voice. "I was afraid of myself."

He looked at her eagerly, half-surmising what she meant; but a sure instinct warned him against asking any question. He had a sense that their two lives were trembling toward each other like two drops of dew that touch and mingle. If he was too precipitate, they might fall to the ground instead of mingling. They were both at the mercy of some other force that bent them toward one another.

"I am going to make a confession," she said with sudden energy. "Please don't look at me, or I can't make it. Let me feel that I am talking to myself, and that you are listening without my knowledge."

She turned her back to him, and looked out across the green marshes to the distant blue of the sea, which lay like a bit of blue glass in a narrow gap of the sand dunes.

"Ever since I can recollect, the strongest feeling I have had has been a passion for freedom. Men don't feel that passion in the same way because they have freedom. They can do pretty much as they like; but a woman is never free. She must dress in a certain way, behave in a certain way, toe the line of convention in all she says and does. She may resent it bitterly, but she can't help herself. She's born into servitude, and she can't escape except at the price of social disaster. I wanted to escape.

"A man doesn't understand the difficulty a woman has in escaping from bondage. She is so absolutely dependent. She has, in most cases, no money of her own. She is subject to the tyranny of virtue. I don't mean she wants to be vicious; but she is bound hand and foot by notions of virtue cherished by her elders, for whom virtue is a set of cold negations. One of the first rules of woman's virtue is that she must sit still till some man may chance to cast on her a favouring glance. She mustn't betray a desire, a preference. She must pass her life waiting for the fairy prince to break the magic spell that binds her, and if he doesn't come she must perish in captivity.

"I escaped to London in 1912. I joined the militant suffragettes, and for a time was wildly happy. After a time I came to see that for a woman to be truly free meant much more than getting a vote. Political equality was one thing; sex equality quite another. I wanted a bigger thing than a vote: I wanted freedom to do as I liked with my own life. I never meant to use my freedom wrongly, but I

wanted it. I wanted to feel that it was really my own, however I might choose to use it.

"Then came the war and brought me real freedom. Woman for the first time stood on a true equality with man. She did a man's work, took a man's wage, and had a man's right to dispose of herself as she pleased. Personal heroism was the one thing required. If a woman could survive that test, no other test was required of her. And this meant, in relation to man"—her voice sank into a whisper—"this meant that woman recovered a right which the great pagans gave to woman, but which Christianity took from her, the right to choose a man instead of waiting to be chosen."

He laid his hand upon her shoulders, which shuddered at his touch.

"I understand, dear," he said softly.

"I want you to understand—to understand just the kind of woman I am."

She turned to him with a flushed face and downcast eyes.

"I offered myself to you," she said. "Believe me, I never offered myself to anyone else. I did it because I loved you."

He drew her gently to himself, and she hid her face against his bosom.

"O, I am ashamed," she whispered. "I am so bitterly ashamed. All my fine new philosophy is shattered into little bits. And now I have told you everything, and we must part."

"Must we?" he said.

She lay very still against his shoulder.

"Must we?" he repeated. "Claire, dear, look up into my face. You've told me a great deal about yourself, but there's one thing you haven't said. There's a question you haven't asked me—you, who've made so strong a claim to freedom—you haven't asked me if I love you."

"Do you?" she whispered.

"With all my heart, dear."

"Then I can be content to lose you. For we must part."

"What do you mean?" he cried half angrily.

He seized her, forcing her to stand before him, her flushed face hidden in her hands.

"What sort of man do you think I am?" he continued. "Do you think I'm incapable of understanding your magnanimity? What do I care for your philosophy? You've said it's shattered into bits. Everything that went with it is shattered, too! Do you suppose I'm mean enough to hold it against you that you asked for my love before I asked for yours? I don't care whether you've chosen me or I've chosen you. If you were the first to choose it's because your nature is the more generous, and mine the meaner. Isn't it enough that you and I are here—that for the third time you've come into my life, unexpectedly, because we had to meet, because we couldn't help coming together? You taught me that faith. It's mine now, and I don't intend to part with it—or you. You're mine, and I claim you."

"But if I'm not worthy? Perhaps you don't think me unworthy now, but you may come to think it."

He interrupted her.

"There's no worthiness or unworthiness in love," he said. "You yourself once said that the essence of love was giving, not bargaining. If you came to me with a thousand stains upon you, I should love you just the same. But you don't—you're coming to me with a purity that no philosophy has been able to smirch. Haven't you come to me fresh from the sea? You're lustrated, the freshness of the sea is on you. That's a symbol. And the dawn's another symbol. The whole world's made new for us in this hour."

From behind the fingers that concealed her face came a low ripple of laughter, that laughter which he had once thought like a peal of silver bells.

"So it seems I'm a conventional woman after all," she said. "You've mastered me, and I'm glad to be mastered."

"You'll find me a kind master," he replied with answering laughter.

She drew slowly towards him, and put her arms round his neck. Her loosened hair, damp with the salt of the sea, fell across his face.

The solitary marshes lay round them, threaded with blue watercourses. The stillness was so great it seemed as though all the life of nature had been suspended, intent on a sacramental act. Suddenly a fresh breeze began to blow from the sea. The sacrament was complete; from its beatific moment they

passed, like awed worshippers, to the tasks and burden of the ordinary day.

They walked on the hard sea beach, till they came to the road that led to the Three Cups.

"Couldn't we breakfast together?" he suggested with boyish eagerness.

"There's the Presbyterian aunt to be considered," she replied with a smile.

"We can 'phone her. Where are you staying?"

"At the Hampton Inn. But my aunt, as I once told you, is a very formidable person, with strict notions as to propriety in woman. I'm afraid she would be shocked if I told her—well, all that happened in the last hour."

"She'd be more shocked if I suddenly appeared at the Hampton Inn with you. Tell her you've met a friend from New York, and will explain later."

"You make me feel just as I did when I once played truant as a little girl."

"Why not? There's nothing more delightful than the unexpected. And, besides, I do really want you to see my house."

She nodded a smiling assent and walked on.

"What a charming place," she said, as they passed through the white gate under the old elms. "I didn't know there was such a place so near to Hampton. How did you find it?"

"I used to come here as a boy. I've known it all my life."

"Fortunate you," she cried. "It looks like a real

home. I've never had a real home. I've only lived in houses, and other people's houses at that."

She explored the old quaint rooms with delighted curiosity. The large three-windowed room with the landscape paper especially pleased her. But her eyes rested with the greatest pleasure on the wide red-tiled hearth, with its hanging pots, and the brick-floored room with its old oaken benches.

An oaken gate-table stood beside the hearth. Baldy appeared with coffee and fresh biscuits, assiduous and smiling, betraying no sign of surprise at the unexpected visitor. They sat long over the simple meal. It gave them a thrilling sense of intimacy to break bread together.

"What a house for a writer," she exclaimed. "How happy a man could be here who wanted to think and write. In New York you can't hear yourself think."

"Unfortunately I'm not a writer. I wish I were."

"Did you never try to write?"

"O, I sent things to the Yale magazine once or twice. But I soon found out that a dozen other fellows could write better than I."

"I used to send articles to a suffragette paper in England, but I made the same discovery."

It seemed a new bond between them that there were things neither of them could do. They were unconsciously engaged in the exploration of each other's qualities. There was a sweet novelty in the act, an enchantment of mutual surprise.

"What did you write about, Claire?"

"Woman's freedom. I don't remember anything in particular except a very hot and indignant exposition of the social meanings of Olive Schreiner's *African Farm*. That was the book which moved me more than any other in those days. There was one passage which burned itself into my mind, a bitter passage in which she says that all the powers of intellect a woman may possess are of less value to her in the battle of life than a dimple in a pretty face. For a time I think I hated beauty in woman."

"You don't now?"

"No. I've come to think of beauty as the only divine thing in human life. It's the only thing that proves God an artist and not a mere soulless mechanician."

"The woman who arranged this house, my aunt Emily Challoner, was beautiful. She had a beautiful soul."

"My aunt hasn't. She has a narrow unlovely soul. Of course she's good in her bitter way, but she's the sort of person who makes you hate goodness because she makes it unattractive. She makes it so repulsive that you want to try badness for a change. I wonder whether we know what we are talking about when we divide the world into the good and the bad. I've met some of the best qualities in bad people, and some of the worst in the good."

"Ah, that's something the war has taught us, isn't it?" he said.

"I often think so. It's done more to teach us what beauty is than anything else could possibly have done.

War's the ugliest thing in the world, but it's the most beautiful, too; it's thronged the mind with the memory of beautiful souls."

"But you and I are going to forget the ugliness and remember only the beauty, aren't we, dear?"

"Are we?" she said. "I don't see how. You can't have light without shadow. We can't even see light without shadow. Pure light, untempered by shadow, blinds and kills us."

"Ah, but I've had so much shadow," he replied. "Let me enjoy my little space of light, won't you, dear?"

"Yes, I was ungenerous. I'm afraid I can't help pursuing an idea, when I should be much wiser in yielding to an emotion. For to-day, at least, let us take all the joy God sends us. O, my dear, if you only knew what it means to me to stop thinking, and allow myself the luxury of feeling."

Their hands met, and he drew her lips to his. Then they rose from the table, and went out into the garden, hand in hand, like two children.

That green care-free world, where the wind drove high white clouds across the heavens, like white sails on a blue sea, and the gulls flashed and floated in an effortless ecstasy of motion, made all the evil of the world seem the impossible invention of some dull-hearted madman. The eye, released from brooding care, did, as Claire had said, realise God as an artist and not a mere mechanician.

"I believe I'm naturally a most joyous person," she confided to him, as though she had just discovered it.

"The trouble is that for years and years I've let my thoughts turn inward. What a relief and bliss it is to turn them outward."

They found a seat in the little rose-garden that lay behind the house, and sat there, exchanging confidences. He spoke to her of his empty boyhood, she of her repressed girlhood.

"I suppose it would sound very dreadful," he said, "if I confessed that I was almost glad when the war came, but I was. I felt that it was the first chance I'd ever had of doing something that was really great. I'd always dreamed of a supreme adventure, but never found it. I wonder, did you feel in that way?"

"I probably felt it more keenly than you because my life was more circumscribed."

"I believe we're all adventurers at heart, but we don't know how to get started."

"But when we're once started we can't stop, can we? We realise a kind of degradation in security."

"We mustn't let ourselves stop, must we, Claire?"

"No, we must go on with our adventuring. If we don't we shall lose faith in each other."

The memory came to him of the days when the old house was an inn, and he pictured to her the sea-battered fishermen coming out of the night to find brief solace in its light and warmth.

"They were adventurers," he said. "They came here for a little while, but they always went back to their venturing. We're rather like them, I think. We've found an inn of rest, but it's within hearing of the sea, and the sea still calls us."

"Of course," she assented. "But just the same, it's a good thing to forget the sea sometimes, isn't it? Those old fishermen knew how to enjoy their moment of release from venturing. Three parts of the wisdom of life lies in enjoying the moment and forgetting the years. This is our moment: let us make the most of it."

"Yes, let us enjoy it," he said. "We've travelled a long way to find it, haven't we?"

"A long way, and a hard way," she said with a sigh. "My dear, do you know that you know very little about me?"

"I know that I love you," he said simply.

"But aren't you just a little curious about me? There are some things about me I'd like you to know, but I can't tell them unless you ask me."

"But I don't ask. I'm content not to ask. I give you back your own counsel—'three parts of the wisdom of life lies in enjoying the moment and forgetting the years.'"

She smiled at that, and sat silent with her hand in his.

A little later she said, "There's one thing I must tell you, even though you don't ask me. I told you once, didn't I, that I was engaged to be married to Major Choate. I want to tell you that I loved him. And I'm not going to offer the common excuse that I was mistaken in my feelings. I did love him. Many women loved him; he was the sort of man who attracted women, and he loved many women. He died

in the first battle of the Marne. The mourning I wore when you first met me was for him."

"He deserved to be mourned. He died bravely," said Chalmers.

"Did you meet him?"

"No, but I heard of him. Had he lived he would have received the Victoria Cross."

"The curious thing is, that when I knew he was dead I felt it the best thing that could have happened to him. His life was such a tangle, poor fellow. He wasn't even faithful to me. But he redeemed all the folly of his life in its splendid last hours, and because I felt that, I couldn't grudge him his end. I didn't feel that I was wrong in loving him; I don't feel so now. What I did feel was complete acquiescence in his death, a sense of absolution from my promises to him, almost a sense of release. Do you understand?"

"I also loved," was his reply. "I hoped to marry my cousin, Mary Challoner. And I also felt that same sense of release when she went out of my life."

"Ah, then you do understand. And, dear, do you think we are wrong if we interpret that sense of release as the proof that we were neither of us in the right path of love? I've the strong belief in a shaping Hand that works upon our lives,—it's the only form of piety of which I'm quite sure—and if there's such a thing, we may choose a hundred wrong paths, but we always come into the right path at last. I'd like to think that though neither of us willed it we've been kept for each other. I think it's only foolish

sentimental people who talk as if first love were the only real love. We have to experiment in love as in anything else. We make our mistakes, but if we're wise we learn from them. The deepest love is rarely first love. It's not first love that counts, it's real love. And ours——"

"Ours is real love, Claire. We did right to forget our experiments in love. That sense of release we both feel is the proof that they were experiments. They weren't meant to last. God be thanked we've found each other! What matters the roads we've trodden if we've reached our haven."

"Our haven!" she repeated. "Yes, that's what love is—a feeling of infinite security. Do you know, if ever you and I should live here, I'd like to alter the name of the house. I'd call it Hearts' Haven. And if the ghosts of the old seamen know anything about it, I'm sure they'll prefer Hearts' Haven to The Three Cups."

They laughed together over the notion, and tossed it to and fro like a glittering ball, she reminding him that Hearts' Haven suggested a much more permanent hospitality than Three Cups, and he telling her that, like the old fishermen who had used the house for three generations, she had come to him out of the bosom of the sea.

"And now I must go," she said. "This rose-garden's delightful. It's a garden of forgetfulness. I've even forgotten the existence of my Presbyterian Aunt."

"When shall we meet again, Claire?"

"To-morrow morning, by the sea."

"At dawn?"

"At dawn, if you say so."

"I'd like it to be dawn, because you came to me out of the dawn and the sea. That's how I shall always think of you. You're my sea-goddess."

"The sea-goddess is going to have a very hard time in explaining herself to a very earthly aunt."

"I've almost as hard a task," he replied, laughing. "I've to explain myself to Baldy."

II

But there was a yet harder task which awaited him and her. To some men and women love is an end in itself. Their lives meet, like two tumultuous streams, which amicably flow in one channel and achieve tranquillity. The wild cataracts are left behind. The dark gorge is ended. The despairs and agonies of life are over, and the full stream slips seaward, under the quiet arch of uneventful days and nights, until it is engulfed without sound or struggle in the final vastness. In achieving love such lives reach their climax. Here the story closes in what is called "a happy ending."

To the larger and the nobler souls love is not an end but a beginning. All the finest things of life happen after love is found. The broader landscapes lie beyond the confluence of the divergent waters.

Through the long summer day this thought took an increasing hold on the mind of Chalmers, and

slowly shaped itself into definiteness. He reviewed his own life. He had been miraculously saved, a brand plucked indeed from the scorching fires of war. For what had he been saved? Certainly not to take his ease in life. He had already swiftly rejected that vision as a temptation of the devil. He had seen quite clearly that there was a part he ought to play in the reconstruction of society, and that to refuse it would be as dishonourable as refusing service on the field of battle. That he had survived was in itself a call to service; there was the intention of dedication, imposed by the nature of events.

And he was very sure that Claire Gunnison must think in much the same way. She had moved in the atmosphere of large causes. She had been thrilled and haunted by the same dream of dedication. She had never been content with the satisfactions of the personal life. The coming into her life of love could not alter the fundamental altruism of her nature; more probably it would quicken it. Neither he nor she were the kind of persons who could find in the satisfactions of passion, however ideally refined, the end and climax of human existence.

He remembered with what scorn she had described the kind of women who accept bondage for the sake of homes, children and respectability. She had made quite clear to him what her aversion to marriage meant—it was aversion to the limitations which conventional marriage lays on a woman's life. She could love deeply and sincerely, but she would cer-

tainly wish a career, and would not permit love and marriage to deprive her of it.

He found something infinitely pathetic in the picture she had drawn of herself, alone in London, pouring out indignant amplifications of Olive Schreiner's bitter satire on the subjugation of women. He remembered having seen the *Story of An African Farm* in the hands of Emily Challoner—it was a favourite book of hers. When she had ceased coming to The Three Cups, a number of her books had been packed in a seaman's chest and left in the carriage-house. He wondered if this book were among them and crossed the lawn to the carriage-house to find out. In a dusty corner he found the chest, locked and securely roped. He opened it, and found in it many old novels by nearly forgotten authors, and at the very bottom of the pile the shabby black-paper covered book that contained Olive Schreiner's passionate message to the world. In the dim light of the carriage-house he sat down and began to read it. Many pages were turned down, some heavily pencilled, and at last he came upon the passage which Claire had quoted.

"Look at this chin of mine, Waldo, with the dimple in it," it ran. "It is but a small part of my person; but had I the knowledge of all things under the sun, and the wisdom to use it, and the deep loving heart of an angel, it would not stead me through life like this little chin. I can win money with it, I can win love; I can win power with it, I can win fame. What would knowledge help me? The less a woman has in

her head the lighter is she for climbing. I once heard an old man say that he never saw intellect help a woman so much as a pretty ankle; and it was the truth."

Frail, passionate voice, lifted up in the silence of the African veldt, what amazing echoes it had roused! What a rage of indignation throbbed in it! Three decades had passed since it broke upon the world; the book was already an old book when he was a boy at school; but as he turned the faded pages he felt the thrill of an inextinguishable life in them. From this crucifixion of a woman's heart had come the great movements which aimed at the emancipation of woman. The leaven of Olive Schreiner's bitterness, the fire of her protest, had entered into millions of lives. The turned down pages and the pencilled passages showed how Emily Challoner's soul had been stirred. He tried to recall her, as he had so often seen her, working in the garden, apparently subdued to the conditions of her lot, and wondered what depths lay beneath the placid surface of her life, what disdain of life, what rebellious passion, carefully concealed or remorselessly restrained. Upon the perfection of her flowers or the decoration of her house she had lavished her heart only for want of some larger devotions; and this life which others, including herself, had thought so perfectly poised and placid, he saw now to have been a life thwarted of real attainment, denied its complete expression, a life which poured out its passion on

trifles and in secret was haunted with the tragic misery of futility.

Was every woman's life like this? Was it a capitulation to what seemed inevitable conditions, a difficult renunciation never thoroughly accepted, because it was felt to be unjust?

Through the long summer morning he read on in the old faded book, unable to put it down. It thrilled him by its daring, its sincerity, the infinite pity of its story. It was indeed "the precious life-blood of a master-spirit"; a broken heart had dropped its blood upon the pages, and they were stained and saturated with it. It was not so much a book as a human heart torn bleeding from a broken body, and flung before the world, with the indignant cry, "Take that, and see, O World, what you have done to woman, what you have made of her!"

He smiled with bitter acquiescence over its revolt against the theological idols which men had set up. The kind of God whom Olive Schreiner hated had long ago disappeared. No one believed in him, not even those who still chanted his praises. He was an abortion created by human spite and ignorance. Men preferred to be Godless rather than accept such a god. They had cast down his images in anger and had jeered at his pretensions. A little woman on the African veldt had come with the hammer of her irony and beaten on his feet of clay: others had followed her with stronger weapons. The war had completed the ruin. And now everyone was running to and fro, astonished and fearful at the immense vacancy created

by the disappearance of the Colossus—like tiny creatures whose habitations are destroyed by an earthquake—and, being frightened at their loneliness, everyone was trying to reconstruct some sort of Deity, who should at least be intelligible, whose laws should be worthy of respect.

Man had out-soared his God—surely an amazing situation! And he remembered the London preacher he had heard, with his glittering platitudes, and the comment made on them by the two workmen, who had discovered that heaven was a lying bribe to keep quiet men who had a passionate sense of injustice. Wasn't that typical of how men were thinking? Wasn't Bolshevism, which attacked the Church and destroyed it without pity, simply the organized expression of the same spirit?

And how was mankind to get back to God, or get a new God in whom it could believe with all its heart?

He could find no answer to that question. The great writer, whose words so thrilled him, had given none. All she could say was, Learn to do without what you can't have. If you can't have God, do without Him. Oppose to the injustice of the world a stubborn stoicism. Gather into your naked breast its thick-flying arrows and die smiling.

And that was no answer. Nor was it the whole answer which this agonized spirit had to make. Had she not also said, "Where I lie down, worn out, other men will stand, young and fresh. By the steps I have cut they will climb; by the stairs I have built they will mount. They will never know the name of

the man who made them. But they will mount and on *my* work, they will climb by *my* stair."

That was surely the true answer. Through the sacrifices of an eternal altruism God would be re-created. Men would go on laying the sacrifices of their broken lives on the altars of an unknown God, until at last the true God came. The sacrifice would not always be in vain nor the altar empty. As the flames rose they would shape themselves into something radiant and divine. The true God would be manifest at last; "Behold He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they also that pierced Him"—Yes, he would come. But it would be no arbitrary revelation. Men would have refashioned Him out of their own broken hearts. The pierced heart would reveal the pierced God.

Through the sunlit air he looked up, as though in apprehension of that vision. In the dazzling height of the firmament he saw this pierced God. The white clouds moved majestical across the sky—He cometh with clouds—

Millions of men had caught a vision of Him as they lay dying in the bloody mire of battlefields; hundreds of thousands of women as they moved amid the dying and the dead. They had seen Him because their eyes were purged by sacrifice. In the old days they drank deep of the cup of pleasure and never thought of Him at all. He himself had been among these careless votaries of joy. He had not been pierced by the sword of sacrifice. That was why he could not see a pierced God. But he saw now. He

knew that whatever was not true about God, this was true—He was pierced. He knew that whatever the secret place of God was like, it wasn't like the preachers' heaven of golden streets—it was a dark shrine where God suffered. And His pangs were the pangs of a Divine altruism. No one could dare to draw near Him, who came unwounded. Men must learn to bruise and break their lives for their fellows, content to say, "By the steps I have cut they will climb. By the stairs I have built they will mount." Only thus could men find their lost God. They would find Him at the top of the stairs saturated by the blood that ran from their bruised hands and broken hearts.

But men and women would never build those stairs for creatures who couldn't climb, who had no hope of climbing. However unjust a man found life, he must believe in an ultimate justice, or he wouldn't struggle for it. However base a man found his fellow-creatures, he must be able to discern the germ-cell of nobility underneath the baseness or he would walk past them in proud disdain and pity. And to disdain men was the unpardonable sin, the true sin against the Holy Ghost.

That passionate-hearted woman in the African veldt who had laid bare so remorselessly the faults of human nature, had nevertheless loved it with an equal passion. She had looked upon the great sisterhood of women, with their vanities and follies, but she had loved them. She had done more than love them; she had believed in them. Every bitter word

she had uttered about their faults had at its root a faith in their ultimate redemption. She had scourged them out of the temple where they trafficked themselves for bodily ease, only that she might drive them into the purer and loftier temples of the spirit.

He closed the book. There came to him the picture of Claire, in some dingy London lodging, bending her fair head over its pages, thrilled, indignant, full of the passion of revolt. But she hadn't stopped with indignant thought. She had flung herself upon the altars of sacrifice. She had faced mobs, she had suffered the stern blessedness of persecution. And, like a thousand other women, she had found in the war her true liberation.

And he knew, that from that path she could not turn back. Love for her must needs mean not a lessened but a wider altruism. And love for him, must mean the same thing, if he was to be worthy of her.

There was no home built with hands where he and she could settle down to the joyous tasks of personal existence. There was no charmed garden where they would be content to walk, hand in hand, behind high walls that hid the infamies of life from them. Emily Challoner had done that and had found how vain its solace. Claire Gunnison would never do it. She had learned too much of what lay outside Eden to be content within it. For her, the angel with the sword had no terrors. She would always prefer the loss of Paradise to the loss of Liberty.

The real beauty of life lay outside the garden. Man only began to be truly man when he had escaped

from the garden. His fall from Paradise was his ascent into manhood.

So he closed the book, but he did not put it back in the chest where it had laid so many years. It had become very precious to him; it was the apocalypse of the heart of woman. It was the apocalypse of Claire Gunnison's heart. He felt as though Emily Challoner must have put it there on purpose that he might find it. From her grave she was reaching out to him, whispering her secret to him, telling him that it had always been her prayer that when the hour came for him to love, he would love with a deeper experience of love than had been vouchsafed to her, with a surer knowledge of woman's nature and the kind of love she craved, the love that satisfied not the senses only but the soul.

He went into the house, and, going up into the room where his aunt had slept, laid the book on the little reading table that stood beside the bed.

Perhaps she knew and understood.

III

She was waiting for him on the sand-dunes, at the place where the road opened on the marshes and the high-shouldered bridge. The sun was an hour above the horizon. The deep quiet of the dawn lay upon the world. Through the gap in the sand-dunes as if framed like a picture, the lean shape of an ocean steamer, far out to sea, beating northward, was vis-

ible. It introduced a note of adventure into the tranquil harmony of dawn.

"Claire," he said, "do you remember what you said yesterday about venturing? You said we were all adventurers, and that we must each go on with our venturing, if we were to keep our faith in one another. I've been thinking a great deal about that."

"And you said that we were like sailors who always hear the call of the sea, didn't you?"

"Do you hear the call of the sea still?"

"Why do you ask me?"

"I'll tell you. We've come to our haven of peace and I think we've deserved it. But dare we dwell in it? I put it to myself like this. In the days when the old house yonder was a tavern I think it served a better purpose than it does now. Men came to it weary, and they went away rested and glad. They would have despised themselves if they hadn't gone. They realised that their happiness wasn't in rest; rest was desirable and sweet to them only because it was the reward of work. So they ate and drank, and then rose up because they heard the calling of the sea, and went back to their life of contest. Then other people came who turned the old tavern into a dwelling-house, a place for pleasure. Were they happier beneath its roof than the fishermen and sailors? I think not. Life is given us for contest, and all its zest is gone when its struggle ends."

"I think I understand. Please go on," she said.

"I know you understand, Claire, because you are at heart much more of an adventurer than I. You've

fought for things all your life. I can't believe you'd be really happy in a life without contest. Didn't you say that there's a kind of degradation in security, that when a human soul has launched out in the sea of adventure it can't turn back?"

"Something like that," she answered with a smile.

"And you meant it?"

"I always mean what I say. But I don't always think the same thought. I don't always respond to the same emotions. There are times when I'm tired of contest. I strive and strive, but nothing seems accomplished. I'm like the sailor who knows that there's always another storm beyond the one he's outridden—that long after he's dead the same storms will sweep across the same seas, just as long before he was born the same tides ran, and the same blackness rose out of the water, and men beat their way through it with torn sails, and ships went down. He's the conqueror of a moment only. But the nature of things is not conquered. And when I think of that I grow tired, O so tired; and it seems to me all I want is just to be folded to the breast of a man who loves me, and close my eyes, and forget everything but love and rest."

"But you can't forget. That's the irony of it, Claire."

"Ah, it's more than the irony—it's the redemption, dear. I've described a mood, but there are other moods, better and higher moods, when I would rather die than forget. There's no bitterer dishonour than to seize one's personal happiness like a greedy child,

and keep it by forgetting the unhappiness of others. I don't say I'm not tempted to do it: I have been often, I still am. All night I've dreamed of how sweet life would be in that old quiet house with you, dear. Only our two selves, shut away from the storm of life, hearing it only, just as one wakes in the night and hears the rain against the window, and sleeps more soundly in the sense of shelter and security. But in my heart of hearts, I know I couldn't do that. And I know that you only spoke the truth when you said that your house served a better purpose as a tavern than a pleasure house; that it had more real happiness in it. Do you know, I think the world itself is like that? Those are happiest who use it as an inn, those unhappiest who vainly strive to make it a permanent habitation."

He drew her head down to his shoulder and put his arm about her. She was tired—he hadn't thought of that. He had always thought her as overflowing with vitality. The clearness of her eyes, the fresh colour of her cheeks, the silver laughter, sweet as a bird's carillon of ascending notes, her vivacity and physical charm, all witnessed that vitality. He hadn't thought enough of the nature of her past life, the flame of high purpose which had consumed her, the exhaustion of continuous effort—the lonely life in London, the fierce adventures of suffragette revolt, and then the hospital in Paris, with its incessant drain on strength and sympathy, its relentless giving. She was tired —no wonder that the thought of rest was sweet. And

it was within his power to give her that rest, instead of which he was urging her to new exertions.

"Claire," he said, with tender compunction in his voice, "forgive me. God forbid I should spoil your dream. You've earned the quiet of the house where one finds love enough. Take it, dear. I thank God I can give it you."

She slipped from his arms and stood upright before him, her eyes at once tearful and flaming.

"Have I asked you for it?" she cried. "Have I said or done anything to make you think I would take it?"

"You said you were tired, Claire."

"And what of that? Weren't you often tired in France? There was a man in my hospital who told me once that he'd been so bone-weary on the march, that he'd got beyond the pain of weariness. He felt nothing, knew nothing; he was a dead man who still walked. But he did walk—that's the point—he went on. There's no great merit in marching against your enemies when you're young and fresh, and elated with the certainty of victory. Any fool can do that. It requires no special courage; it's a matter not of courage but of instinct and high spirits. The true courage is to go on when every atom of your flesh shrieks out against the cruelty of your will, when you'd like to die and can't. When you've given up believing you will win, but are still resolved that you won't retreat. You know what that means. You've done it. And in my poor way I've tried to do it: and you and I are not

going to retreat now, and neither must tempt the other to retreat. We must go on."

"I meant to please you," he said humbly. "I was sorry for your weariness and I pitied you."

"I know that. All women find it sweet to be pitied, and I'm woman enough to be grateful for your pity. But, just the same, pity has always worked the undoing of women. They like to be thought frail, women whose bodies are as finely tempered as a sword, because it's so sweet to be pitied. They are glad to be weak, and will pretend a weakness if only they can evoke generosity and tenderness in a man. It's part of the game they've been taught to play from childhood. They've played the game so long they've come to believe in it, and they accept with complacency the nonsense that is talked about the weaker vessel and the superior strength of man. Well, it simply isn't true. Women do most of the hard work of the world, and certainly endure more pain than men. They don't assume any airs of superiority on that account, and neither should they ask for pity. Pity degrades. As long as woman is so eager to accept pity she will be inferior—it serves her right. What she asks for to-day is equal comradeship with man—to bear all that he bears, to march side by side with him, to accept nothing from him that she cannot give."

Her heat suddenly spent itself, and a little mocking laugh broke from her lips.

"I'm talking to you as though you were a committee, am I not? That comes of having been a militant suffragette. It's a habit which I've never over-

come. However, it's just as well you should know the worst of me as well as the best."

"If this is the worst, it's not very alarming," he said gravely. "Indeed, it helps me to say something I've been rather afraid to say. I'll put it quite bluntly. I always felt you would want to go on with your career—you couldn't be content with ease. I've the same feeling. I want to go on, and with your comradeship. Claire, will you go to Russia with me?"

She looked at him, startled. "Russia," she repeated. "Why Russia?"

"Because the greatest peril of the world is Russia. Because Russia's become a huge festering sore, which may infect the whole world. She's the diseased spot in Europe. If she can't be cured all Europe will be infected by her. She's an infinitely greater menace to the world to-day than Germany ever was."

"I've never thought very much about Russia," she confessed.

"None of us have—that's where we've been mistaken. We began by talking of her as a Colossus —her armies were a steam-roller which would crush its irresistible way to Berlin. She failed, but how magnificently she failed! She left three million bodies on the road before she turned back. It looked at first as if she had outstripped every other nation in enlightenment; she prohibited vodka! We marvelled at the daring of the act and applauded. It never occurred to any one of us to ask whether an arbitrary reform, created by an imperial ukase, represented the national will. We know now that it didn't.

It was a piece of tyrannical benevolence, as so much of the Czar's rule had been tyrannically malevolent. Then came the fall of Czardom, and again we rejoiced. It was another glorious step taken toward universal democracy. And, again, it never occurred to us to ask if the Russian people, who had so boldly seized their liberty, knew how to use it, or had had any kind of training which would enable them to use it wisely. They didn't use it wisely, and the next thing we knew was that Russia was out of the war. From that moment we ceased to be interested in her. We stiffened our backs and shrugged our shoulders, and said, 'We can win without her.' We were too busy winning the war to think of what happened to her or to care. As long as she could help us we praised her; the moment she sank down by the wayside, crippled and maimed, we forgot her existence. The result of our blindness and neglect we see to-day. We left a hundred and seventy million people to their fate; they are revenging themselves to-day by jeopardising all the fruits of the victory we have won."

"But what can you do for Russia? When you talk of going to Russia, what is it you want to do? Is it to fight?"

"No, it's not to fight. I've been offered a commission with the Canadian force in Russia—an old friend of mine, Major Clyde, begged me to join him. Since then the Canadian force has been withdrawn."

"Why didn't you accept it?"

"I had no heart for shooting Bolshevists. I can

shoot wolves, but I couldn't bring myself to shoot a flock of sheep driven wild by terror."

"If all that the papers say is true the Bolshevists are much more like wolves than sheep."

"I know what the papers say, and so far from concealing the truth I don't believe they've told the half of it. But that doesn't alter my opinion that the Bolshevists are much more like sheep than wolves. They're not inherently cruel, but they've been tortured into madness. A creature naturally weak and amiable, when driven mad by injustice, will commit far worse excesses than a much stronger creature. Weakness, when it is angry, develops a more deadly fury than strength. Doesn't the Bible speak of the 'wrath of the Lamb'?"

"But if they're mad they must be restrained. And how can you restrain them unless by the sword?"

"Isn't that a plan of dealing with madness which had long ago been discarded? It's the method Charles Reade describes in his novel—the strait jacket, the floggings, the ingenious tortures, the utmost exertion of brutal force. It killed men, but it didn't restore them to sanity. The modern asylum is run upon the principle of restoring sanity, not of punishing insanity as though it were a crime. Russia's insane, but the strait-jacket won't help her. We can't flog her back to sanity; not all the armies of Europe could do that. We have to use suggestion, to push the evil thoughts out with clean and good thoughts. We have to teach her."

"Yes, I can see that," she answered. "Guns and swords can't suppress ideals."

"No, they can't. But ideas can push out other ideas. That's precisely what I've come to see. If you can plant a sturdy oak in a soil full of weeds and get it to grow, it will push the weeds out and kill them. We can only overcome evil with good. When the good begins to take root in men's hearts the evil perishes by itself."

He was silent a moment. She put her hand in his, and so they sat, gazing out across the marshes.

Presently she said, "I begin to see your thought, but there's one thing troubles me. Why go to Russia? Isn't there work enough for us both in America?"

"America hasn't suffered as Russia has," he replied. "Her soil hasn't been saturated with blood and tears. When the soil of a nation has been torn up with the plough-share of sorrow you can sow your seed in it. Besides, America is strong. She can take care of herself. Russia is helpless."

"Your last reason appeals to me most," she replied. "Ever since I was a little girl any creature that was weak and helpless appealed to me. I've made many mistakes, but they were nearly all mistakes in thought, not in feeling. People used to say to me, 'You mustn't be ruled by your feelings.' But if you aren't governed by your feelings, what is there to govern you? I think you're always safer when you follow your feelings than when you follow your reason. You're more like God, who may rule the

universe as a God but rules men as a Father. All the noblest acts of life are the product of emotion—patriotism, love, martyrdom. We don't reason about such things. We feel and we act."

"Ah," he said passionately, "if only the world could really feel what Russia is suffering! There's a saying about Christ which has often struck me—He was moved with compassion when he saw the people as sheep without a shepherd. He saw through His feelings, through His sympathies; and that's why He saw what no one else saw. His disciples didn't sympathise, and therefore all they saw was a troublesome mob, to be got rid of on the terms easiest to themselves. He saw through His sympathies, and that was why he didn't see a troublesome mob, but a bewildered flock of sheep without a shepherd."

"Yes, that's true, beautifully true," she replied. "Why did no one at the Peace Conference have anything to say about Russia? Wasn't it just because they didn't see her through their sympathies. They only wanted to get rid of a troublesome mob."

"And they forgot," he continued, "that a hungry mob is the most dangerous thing in the world. If you dismiss it heartlessly in the desert it will go away to work mischief. It will be filled with bitterness and resentment, and it won't stay in the desert. It will overflow into the towns and villages, lighting firebrands as it goes, and it will take by force what the world wouldn't give it in kindness. Claire, that's how I see Russia. It may be too late now to give it the bread it cried for—I don't know. It has begun its

march of devastation; perhaps no divine voice can win it now. It would have been easy once, O, so easy. A child's finger can stop the thread of water in the mountains, but who shall stop it when it is a river, a river in full flood, with all the dams broken down and the banks levelled? I'm not vain enough to think that I can, or that both of us together can. But we can do something. We must do what we can. And if the flood sweeps us down, we shall at least know that we tried, we will not be afraid to try."

He was again silent, gazing out across the sunlit marshes into what seemed illimitable distances.

"We are but tiny specks of life in all this immensity," he said, "but we can do something."

"But we mustn't think about the immensity," she said softly. "That's an old temptation of mine. Many times, when I've been weary of striving, I've gone out under the quiet stars at night, and have said, 'What does anything matter?' And they were like bright eyes twinkling with mockery at my puny strength. Out of their majestic silences a voice said, 'You are quite right, nothing matters. We have seen a thousand generations pass, and all things are as they were from the beginning of Time. We saw the first man rise from the dust and proclaim himself the master of the earth. We have seen his children come in countless millions. We have seen cities rise, and vast armies march, and conquerors move in triumph, and great empires and kingdoms established, and where are they? They were but dust that rose in the sun for a moment and caught its glory, and then

sank again into nothingness. You are no greater or wiser than they. They altered nothing and you will alter nothing. Why spend your life in a striving which achieves nothing? Be content to breathe, to live, to die—it is your only epic.' Dear, I believe more souls have been ruined by the conviction of their insignificance than by the haughtiest pride that man has ever felt. Pride is a divine quality, if we know how to use it. Until we have pride in ourselves, belief in ourselves, we can do nothing. Let the stars say what they will, there's a voice in man which says, 'The stars are but shining dust—you are a creature who can will and think, you are as much more wonderful than the stars as the bird that flies is than the cold stones of the mountain-top which he uses for his eyrie. Long ago I ceased to console myself with the immensity of the midnight heavens; I couldn't afford the vision, it humbled and enfeebled me. If you and I are to do anything that is worthy we must first of all believe that it is something that should be done, and then that it is something that we can do. We're not insignificant, you and I. We may be only two tiny specks of life moving in immensity; but we are alive; we can move, and we're greater than the material elements in which we move."

"It would be much easier to go to Russia as a soldier," he mused. "It's a clean, austere, fine life; everything is ordered for you, and all you have to do is obey."

"Yes, there's a fineness in that, but I think it finer to will your own life, and trust your will."

"But I'm asking you to trust my will, too, Claire."

"Not altogether. I love you, and because I love you, if I were in doubt I would trust your will and accept it. But I am not in doubt. I begin to have a vision of what you may do. If a frail creature like Kerensky could hold all Russia in his hand for months, if a narrow bitter anarchist like Trotsky could come out of poverty and ignorance to find Russia plastic in his hands, surely for you there's a chance of doing something. Russia waits for the wiser voice, the wider brain, the more charitable heart. Why should they not be yours? And if you fail, you, at least, will have failed gloriously."

"Not I, dear—say we. For you will go with me, won't you?"

"I will go with you to the world's end. 'Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou diest, I will die, and there will I be buried.' "

He drew her flushed and eager face to his, and their lips met in a kiss which was the covenant of their souls.

Through the intense stillness of the morning came the distant sound of a steamer threshing her way northward.

It was the call of the sea, the invocation to new adventure.

CHAPTER X

A LETTER FROM MAJOR CLYDE

"You ask me if I can give you any information about our friend Chalmers and his wife. I will try to set down the little that I know. I met them in the last days of July in Vancouver. I had just returned from Siberia, where for some months I had been busy in a sort of difficult police work which was very trying to one's spirits, and almost devoid of interest. Chalmers may have told you that at the time when the Armistice was signed I was very eager that he should join me, and I quite expected that he would do so. Afterwards, when I discovered what our work in Siberia was, I was glad that he did not come. It was really the dreariest sort of kicking one's heels that can be imagined.

"I don't suppose that I can convey to your mind any idea of the immense depression that Siberia imposes on the spirit. I felt as though I had been suddenly pushed out of the back door of the world into a place utterly derelict and forsaken. The people one meets don't seem quite human. They have the gestures of human creatures, and have, no doubt, all the ordinary human qualities, but they impress one as ghosts and wraiths, wandering up and down in a grey atmos-

phere of silence and solitude, entirely detached from the rest of the human race. I had a curious sense that they were always whispering to one another—ghosts whispering, if you understand—the whole land whispering. And the land itself is so vast and so monotonous. You can imagine no end to it. An army of a million men might be lost in it as completely as a child in a forest. The mid-Atlantic is not more solitary or more secret.

"I tell you this in order that you may understand why I was glad after all that Chalmers did not accept the commission offered him in Siberia. If I had known the sort of work that was expected from me, I certainly would not have come. I expected some real fighting with definite results—the job was put up to me as a kind of crusade for the redemption of Russia. All I can say is that I couldn't work up in myself any sense of a crusade. You can't crusade against ghosts. Besides, there was never anything definite in our position or our thoughts. It wasn't like the Somme or Vimy Ridge, where we had a quite definite army to attack, an enemy of whose methods and objects we were perfectly aware. Here we didn't quite know who our enemy was, or what he was thinking. He was silent and secret like the land itself. We had a sense of beating the air, of moving in a void. I am not a very sensitive person, but this uncertainty wore me down and got upon my nerves. Chalmers is peculiarly sensitive to what I may call the atmosphere in which he moves. I don't believe he would have stood the situation. It was enough to

make a sensitive man mad, and some of our men did actually fall into a depression of spirits which might very easily have developed into mental disease. So, remembering all that Chalmers had already endured, I was glad that he was never put to the test of Siberia.

"Well, I met him and his wife in Vancouver, as I said, and was never more genuinely surprised than when I found they were on their way to Russia. I found him much improved in health, bright and elate. And his wife is certainly a most charming person. She is more than charming; she impressed me as a woman of singular spiritual energy. Perhaps I use the wrong word—I don't mean that she was religious, but simply that she had a kind of force in her which was the expression of the fineness and greatness of her spirit. It was something intangible and pervasive, something that breathed through her words and gestures; she made me think of Gordon going to Khartoum! There was a gladness of dedication about her—I fancy if I had seen Gordon starting for Khartoum that's just what I should have recognised in him as most remarkable. Chalmers had the same look: the aspect of a man who saw some kind of vision that was great and distant.

" 'What do you expect to do in Russia?' I asked.

"He outlined his views very simply and clearly, his wife adding from time to time a corroborating word. As you know these views, I need not recapitulate them. The gist of them was that Russia couldn't be

saved by the sword but by education; she needed not the soldier but the teacher.

"I confess the notion sounded to me Quixotic and chimerical. The Russian is to me the most elusive entity in the world. He's not even an entity—you can't grasp him, you can't see him, he isn't tangible. He's a collection of diffused qualities, subtle and contradictory; I can't better express what I mean than by saying again that he's like a ghost or a wraith wandering on the edges of the world. No one knows the Russian; he doesn't even know himself. He lives and moves so completely in an atmosphere of the imagination that his picture of himself is imaginary. He hasn't really any national qualities, because in no true sense of the word is Russia a nation. And, like all people governed by the imagination, when he touches realities he is helpless; and when he wakes from his dream he is afraid, and goes into tantrums like a frightened child, and is capable of fearful violence.

"Of course I said a good deal of this kind to Chalmers, but it had no effect upon his own views. He smiled quite serenely, and his wife from time to time interjected a question, or a criticism which had a gentle irony in it. It was evident that their minds were quite made up, and I felt it would be unkind to endeavour to disturb an equanimity which they found so satisfying. They were resolved to go to Russia, and the last thing that would deter them would be an exposition of the futility of their scheme or its peril. I suppose martyrs aren't amenable to

reason. Martyrdom is a sort of spiritual inebriation. And again I thought of Gordon going to Khartoum, and knew that in all heroism there is a sort of noble obstinacy—that you can't turn the martyr back from his cross, and the more you try to do so the more determined will he be to pursue it.

"On one point only did I find myself in partial agreement: Chalmers was certainly right in believing that Russia couldn't be saved by the sword. Force has always failed against her. If we could march victorious armies into Moscow and Petrograd they would avail nothing. They might establish some form of government, which would hold together only as long as the armies remained on Russian soil; the moment they withdrew the old Russia would emerge quite unaltered. It would be like ploughing the sea; the sea rolls back after the warships have passed, and very soon not even a bead of foam marks their passage.

"Russia is a state of mind, an idea. Her people are mastered by ideas, are the slaves of ideas, in a way that has no parallel in any other race. The Russian mind is a brooding mind. It is really ignorant of the practical aspects of life and is indifferent to them. The Russian revolution is an affair of ideas. Lenine and his kind inoculate the Russian mind with a bad idea, and it spreads like a raging infection. There is no power of resistance to it in a people which is seventy per cent. illiterate. The illiterate man is never practical. He is familiar with none of the permanent standards which stabilise human conduct.

He can see nothing but his idea; he sees it in its nakedness, follows it with a furious insistence, is incapable of perceiving it in its relation to other ideas and in its relation to practical facts. The one-idead man is always a bigot and a fanatic. Because he is a fanatic he is guilty of the wildest excesses. It follows naturally that the only way of driving out an evil idea is by the inoculation of a good idea. It is an anti-toxin which is needed. Chalmers held that the mind of Russia was fluid and plastic. It could be educated, and in education alone was its hope. To quote again his phrase, which was the summary of his faith, what Russia needed was the teacher, not the soldier; and in this verdict I came to agree with him.

"But you ask the question whether he has a chance of success in this Quixotic undertaking? Frankly, I don't know. I can give a thousand good reasons why he must needs fail but there is always the thousandth and one reason which affirms the hope of success. If it doesn't exactly promise success, it remains enigmatic. It leaves a field for conjecture, and where there is conjecture there is hope.

"In these days which I spent with him at Vancouver, my thoughts concerning him underwent many fluctuations. I began by pitying him. From the height of my arrogant commonsense I regarded him with ironic commiseration. Latterly I found myself looking up to him. I had decreased and he had increased. He had grown bigger, larger— In the end I saw him godlike, towering high above me, and my com-

monsense appeared a very paltry coign of vantage, which afforded me the most precarious foothold.

"If you ask me for the exact truth of what I think of him, I must reply that I do honestly think him a little mad. Perhaps, however, that is not an accusation but a compliment. Most of the great things done in this world have been done by madmen. At least, that's what their contemporaries thought them. The truly shameful fault in most of us is that we're too sane. We're too sane to tread the road to Calvary. It is only the divinely mad who risk a cross for the sake of a quite problematic redemption of other folk.

"I can't help feeling that Chalmers is not so much altered as transfigured by the sufferings which he has endured. You must remember that for many weeks his mental life was in abeyance. Of course, in a sense, we're all altered by our experience of war. We're older in spirit. We've lived through such shattering emotions. A man might live to be ninety in the ordinary avocations of life and never know a tithe of the emotions which we have experienced. And emotions age men much more than years. It is perfectly true, as some forgotten poet says, that 'we live in feelings, not in figures on a dial.' We went to the war young and fresh; whatever else we did not leave on the battlefield we left our youth there. Those of us who have returned know that we are old men. We can never again recapture the first 'fine careless rapture' of our youth.

"But with Chalmers this process was much more severe than with most of us. I think it may be said

to amount to a reconstitution of the molecules of the body and the brain. I suppose that a very slight reshifting of these atoms might produce surprising results in any one of us. Genius itself appears to be the result of such a slight reshifting of the mental properties. It's the little extra which distinguishes genius from talent—the over-plus in one direction, the new arrangement of brain-particles, the slight excess beyond normal; and this excess may be produced by what appear trivial causes, such as a childish illness or an accident. I think it is something of this kind which has happened to Chalmers.

"I know that I explain myself badly, because I have no exact knowledge of science; but I am aware of a sort of new Chalmers which has been subtly created out of the old Chalmers. I sit with him and talk with him much in the old way. He is perfectly human and normal. He can appreciate our old trench jests, recall the humours of the men, the absurd accidents, the ridiculous situations, and laugh heartily over them. Then, quite suddenly, a strange questing look comes into his eyes—a visionary, prophetic look. He smiles gently, but the sources of his mirth are hidden from me. I am aware that he is moving on a plane of thought quite different from mine. It as though one who walked beside you on a well-trodden road were suddenly caught up by a great wind, and you see him walking in the clouds. He has become suddenly remote, inaccessible. Your words no longer reach him. His words, if he should speak, have a strange accent. The moment passes and he is at your

side again, the comrade whom you knew and love and trust. But you can't forget that he's been away from you, that his mind has other contacts of which you know nothing; that there's something in him which is unexplained, and remains inexplicable.

"Perhaps I shouldn't say inexplicable, because as I look back I recognise certain elements in his character which suggest a partial clue. For example, he was unusually sensitive, unmistakably what we call 'high-strung.' It didn't interfere with his courage, which was always remarkable. He took not only the ordinary risks with coolness, but he went out of his way to confront perils which he might easily and quite legitimately have avoided. I've known him stand perfectly erect under shellfire when no one would have blamed him for taking cover, and, indeed, he ought to have done so. He did it as an encouragement to his men, he said; but I think it was also an encouragement to himself. He was afraid of being afraid. His courage was not an affair of blood and nerve; it was a temper of the spirit. He had the clearest apprehension of danger. He no doubt carried in his mind a picture of it, as a highly sensitive and imaginative man often does, but he opposed to the fear that invades the nerves and the fear that dismays the imagination the courage of the will, the drive and urge of the spirit. One of the lessons which the war has taught me is that the bravest men are usually the most sensitive of men; they know that they can't afford to let themselves go, even for an instant; all they have to rely on is the force of the spirit, and this spiritual

force carries them to great heights which are quite beyond the reach of a courage which is merely physical.

"If we take this imaginative sensitiveness as the outstanding characteristic of our friend, I think we do get a real clue to his present attitude toward life. Such a man can never quite take the world as it is. He's not charitable enough, he's not tolerant enough, he looks too much beneath the surface. Most of us have reason to be dissatisfied with life, but after a time we shake down into a tolerant acquiescence in its imperfections. Chalmers will never do that. He demands perfection. He is haunted by dreams and ideals of perfection. He can't bring himself to compromise with imperfection, to say, 'Things are about as good as we can get them under existing circumstances, and our obvious wisdom is to make the best of them.' Of course the comment of commonsense is 'What's the use of crying for the moon?' But isn't this crying for the moon a rough synonym for that divine discontent which goads men, the finer and the rarer men, to the quest of the unattainable? And if no one ever spent his passion in a quest of the unattainable, how little would be attained? Commonsense writes such a man down as a fool: it is not impossible that other generations will crown him as a saviour.

"I don't think, if there had been no war, that Chalmers would ever have settled down to the complacent satisfactions of a utilitarian career. There's a certain strain of wildness in his blood, a spark of unrest cap-

able of flaring up into passionate refusals, admirations, devotions. He had an ear delicately tuned to the trumpet call of romance. He was bound to have followed it, breaking loose from the conventions of a commonplace existence. He is the sort of man who might have settled down into an ordinary career, and have gone about it in apparent content for a dozen years, and then some morning he would have been missing from his office and his home; he would have gone off on some lone adventure. After many years he might have been discovered, as a sailor before the mast, a planter in a South Sea Island, a dweller in Arab tents, an explorer of African jungles, or a cowled brother in a Trappist monastery. There are more romances of that kind than one imagines. Army life revealed a good many of them. There were in the ranks thousands of men who had strange histories behind them. The keynote in all these histories was scornful repudiation of the commonplace.

"The war gave these men their chance, just as it gave Chalmers his chance. You'll remember that he didn't stop to consult anyone; he rushed up to Canada and enlisted, and came back to tell his uncle what he'd done. You can read the whole secret of his temperament in that act. And it's all of a piece that now that the war's over he can't settle down to a conventional existence. He heard the trumpets of romance blowing and instantly followed as the children followed the Pied Piper of Hamelin. He hears those same trumpets blowing to-day out of the dark night which covers Russia. How far he really thinks that he can be

of service to Russia I can't guess; probably the great thing that fascinates and draws him is the conviction that there, in the wild upheaval and commotion, is something worth doing, something that calls for sacrifice, courage, devotion, a man's task, a martyr's dream. You can't hold him from it. If it hadn't been this adventure, it would have been another. It is vain to woo with the comfort of an alien nest the young eagle who has felt the wind in his wings and has discovered the ecstacy of flight in the immeasurable fields of air.

"His wife has the same temperament. She is cooler than he in judgment, much more experienced, gayer in temper, but fundamentally they are alike. She's less of a dreamer, because she has discovered how many dreams are pure illusions, but she is still an idealist. She is more practical than he, as I think women always are more practical than men. She will accept the risks of this adventure with a courage equal to his own, but she will bring to it reasoned apprehension, the calm scrutiny of the clear-sighted and collected mind. She will discern better than he what is possible and impossible in their undertaking, but if she elects to attempt the impossible it will be with a will perfectly resolved and incapable of capitulation.

"This letter has grown beyond my intention, and I must now bring it to a close. I have been moved to write very fully about Chalmers because I love him, and there is a gratification in attempting the portrait of one whom you love. I want you to understand him, as I think I understand him. If we should never

see him again, as I confess is only too possible, I want you to see him in his essential nobleness. For whatever happens to him he is going on a very noble errand, and whether he succeeds or fails we shall continue to love and admire him.

"I have only to add that he and his wife left Vancouver last week for Vladivostock. They intend making their way to Moscow. In the confused condition of Siberia it may be many weeks before they reach their destination or we hear any word from them.

"During our last days together a curious silence grew between us, the silence of complete understanding. I suppose that in a sense we had talked each other out: the need for speech was over, speech could do no more for us, and our intercourse was through our sympathies. I have thought since that this sociable silence was the finest flower of our friendship. I found myself constantly thinking of Chalmers and his wife with a great tenderness, which was too delicate to be exposed to the risks of language. If I could have spoken of it, it would have vanished, like a perfume when it is released. There was another reason, too; I had to preserve my own equanimity and theirs. We couldn't afford emotional expression; it would only have made our impending separation more difficult. I understood what Elisha meant when he told the sons of the prophets to hold their peace and not plague him with their voluble vociferous lamentations about the departure of Elijah. When you are waiting for the chariot of fire that bears your friend

away, you walk in silence and resent the impertinence of speech.

"I don't know whether you have visited Vancouver, but if you have you will remember Stanley Park, and particularly a little jutting promontory overlooking the narrow entrance to the harbour. It was there we spent our last evening together. It was an evening of extraordinary stillness. The sun went down in a perfectly clear sky, leaving behind a suffusion of delicate greenish light, through which the veiled stars shone dimly. A coasting steamer passed at the foot of the cliff, so close that we might have dropped a stone upon her deck; we saw her for a long time, until she became a mere speck on the opalescent waters, and was at last lost in the deep purple shadow cast by the wooded hills. Across the bay lights sprang up in North Vancouver, reminding us of fireflies, so tiny and so scattered were they. In the deep hush we could hear the clank of donkey engines on the ships in the inner harbour half a mile away, and the voices of men at work. There rose from a hidden ship a little cloud of steam, which sailed up into the sky like a feather, and was dissolved in the clear upper air. We watched it disappear, and sat silent for a long time, when suddenly Claire quoted in a low voice the lines of Tennyson's *Ulysses,*

> My purpose holds
> To sail beyond the sunset, and the paths
> Of all the western stars, until I die.

Chalmers caught up the quotation and continued

> It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles
> Though much is taken, much abides—
> One equal temper of heroic hearts.
> . . . . . .
> To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

"They both spoke very softly, with a kind of glad solemnity, like worshippers before an altar, reciting a creed, proclaiming in the presence of unseen powers their ultimate faith. I understood that it was their valediction. They, no doubt, meant me to interpret it so. I have thought since that it was almost a stroke of genius to put their farewell into words so exquisite, though I am quite sure it was done on an impulse. We certainly could not have trusted ourselves to use words of our own. I noticed also, not at the time but afterwards, when I looked up Tennyson's *Ulysses,* that Chalmers had omitted the lines which speak of weariness, and lessened strength, and a will made weak by time and fate. I suppose he rejected them as an untruth, as regards himself. He felt nothing of the kind, and, indeed, I had never seen him look happier. He had upon his face the kind of look which I had often noticed when we went forward to some dangerous and difficult enterprise, a look of supreme satisfaction, of something that went very far beyond happiness, that included it but exceeded it, the look of a man quietly surrendered to his fate and deeply contented with it, whatever it might be. Claire's face had the same aspect, but with an added touch of eagerness. And there was something in the intense stillness of the evening, the pale green light, the fresh scent of the sea, the little coast-

ing steamer pushing out so boldly into the wide unknown that made a perfect stage-setting to our drama. It was almost as though we were actually rehearsing our parts in a drama in a dim unpopulated theatre. To-morrow the curtain would go up, the audience would be gathered, and our test would come.

"We rose silently, and took the path under the immense trees which led to our hotel.

"The next morning they went on board the *Empress of Asia* and sailed upon their great adventure."

. . . . . .

This letter reached me on the tenth of August. Since then I have had no news of Chalmers. There is nothing to be alarmed at in this. Postal communications with Russia have been delayed and precarious for a long time. I hardly expect any definite news until October. In the meantime, Major Clyde informs me that he has certain friends in Russia to whom he has communicated the facts about Chalmers and he believes he can rely on them to give Chalmers any help in their power. It is very likely that the first knowledge I shall get of Chalmers will come through Major Clyde. The Major is not only, as his letter reveals, an ardent friend, but he is a man of great energy, cool judgment, and indefatigable persistence in anything which he undertakes. Since he parted with Chalmers he has been very unsettled. He had tried to take up a law-practice in Vancouver—he had an excellent and rising reputation as a lawyer before the war—but he finds he cannot concentrate his interest upon it. He finds, also, as so many returned

soldiers do, civil life dull and flat: besides which, his former practice has vanished, other men have got ahead of him, and it is difficult to get started again in the old grooves. I gather that he is restless and dissatisfied. In a recent letter he said that he wished he had gone to Russia with Chalmers. He adds that he is half-resolved to follow him; if no news comes from Chalmers by Christmas he will certainly do so. I am quite sure that he means what he says. It would not surprise me to hear at any moment that he had gone. He puts it to himself as a duty, but I think, to quote his own phrase, that he also has "a soul delicately tuned to the trumpets of Romance," and sooner or later he will follow them.

THE LONG VENTURE

Let us arise
And go far hence
Into the width immense
Of ways untravelled, lands uncharted—
We care not whither,
Under what change of skies,
What war of weather,
From whom we may be parted,
If, from this trivial eminence
Of oft-climbed days we may escape,
Rounding at last the dull confining cape
Out-thrust
Between us and all the glory of the sea,
We, anchored miserably
In a calm harbour where our spirits rust.

For we are tired
Of hopes attained,
Vain things desired,
And gain which nothing gained.
We have eaten, drank and dressed,
Been careful that the trouser-seam was pressed,
The white shirt-front immaculate.
Talked with little men who seemed great,

Whose eyes wandered while we talked;
Driven, ridden, walked
With casual women, shallow-eyed
And shallow-voiced, who had their "views"
Of this and that; marched up avenues
Thronged and wide,
A day's wonder, and the next day found
Ourselves going on the old round
Unnoticed, seeking work, maybe,
Work hard to find or never found.—

O God, we are weary of it all,
Jazz-bands, dances, stale air,
Stale compliments, the hard glare
Of thronged streets, the smutty rain,
The stink of gasolene—
We are not vain,
But recollecting all that we have seen,
Suffered, achieved, and been,
We think we hear the call
Of something bigger, the spiritual opulence
Of dawns at sea, of wide untainted skies.
Wherefore, let us arise
And go far hence.

We care not what land,
What ambiguous sea,
By what strange heavens spanned,
So we are free.
There are too many lives

Crowded in cities for the one to grow,
The soil rots over-fecund: no life thrives,
The stream coagulates and will not flow.
The thronged roots urge out one another,
Till man hates his brother
For seizing that of which himself hath need,
And soon the flower dwindles to a weed.
Better the waste of sand
Where rides the Arab in a houseless land,
The empty prairie round whose space are shut
Blue doors of sky which none can ever reach,
The lonely canyon and the fisher's hut
The sounding sea along a vacant beach.
We, who have trafficked in great spaces,
Held in our hands great destinies,
Felt the free winds upon our faces,
Slept under starry skies,
How shall we rest on a Rented bed,
Pay toll and tribute for each crust of bread,
Be accommodating, glib, polite,
Come home punctually at night,
Rise at a certain hour and go abroad,
We, who have lodged with God?

God never asked us to pay Him rent
For the sky's blue tent,
Nor sent in a bill for the drink we took
From the mountain brook,
Nor made account of what we spent
In the Earth, which is His hostelry;
But like a kind Landlord stood near by

And smiled, and rubbed His hands, and said
"You are welcome, Sirs, to eat my bread,
Don't ask for a bill, it is not my way.
I am repaid by your happiness;
But, if you insist, it will come some day,
Let us say,
By the PETITE VITESSE—
Which is a train of French invention,
That starts out with the best intention,
But when it arrives no man can guess.
My gifts always come by special express,
My bills I send by the PETITE VITESSE,
Which often gets lost upon its road,
Snared by a sunset lamp in the west,
Caught in a thicket of stars, maybe,
Bogged where the Milky Way's o'erflowed
And spilt its fires in a flooding sea."
So I have heard God talk to me
Like a wise kind man who loves his jest.

There's a wind that blows
Tonight on the harbour-bar,
There's a ship that goes
Ere sinks the morning star.
The rain drives hard on the dripping rows
Of flags strung out in the dreary street
And, through the turmoil, hoarsely sweet,
A siren blows—
The ship's voice calling aloud to me
Of a tide that flows,
Of green waves broken on glittering prows,

Of the engines' rhythmic ecstacy,
Of open spaces
And honest faces,
Of the clean rage and the clean mirth
Of the friendly sea,
Of all the bigness of the earth,
The unapprehended lonely world
Over which no flag's unfurled,
Where God sits like an Alchemist
Making great Dawns from tinted mist,
Making new islands, flung complete
Like spring blossoms round His feet,
Making new mountains, pluckt forth hot
From the earth's entrails; and of these things not
One that is not fashioned right
For man's use and man's delight.
All this is ours, our heritage,
And shall we rot
In the miry swamp of stagnant days,
With eyes glued to a ledger's page,
Chattering with fools of games and plays
Careful to see one's clothes are neat,
One's scarf tied in a proper way,
With a day at Coney, when the heat
Covers the city with fœtid grey,
And a foolish face on a sea-side seat
That simpers to ours—one's highest bliss
A snatched embrace or a loveless kiss?
Is it for this that we should stay?
By the God who made us, NO, we say.

For God's not only a genial Host,
And an Alchemist, but an Artist, too,
Who, when He has wrought His uttermost,
Flings wide the door of his studio,
And seeks that the work His soul hath loved
May be approved;
Being like man in this,
That bliss unshared is empty bliss,
That the crown of all achievement lies
In man's approval—that's the prize
Worth the striving,
Worth the giving
Of poured out hearts; for there is none,
Not even God, who liveth alone;
And God, when He makes a sun,
Waits man's "Well done,"
When he clothes a flower in raiment fit
Grieves until man discovers it,
Covets the answering sense
Of beauty in man fulfilling His,
And, having wrought this world immense,
Counts upon man for audience.

When the night grows still
Have you felt the thrill
Just as the head begins to nod
Of a creaking stair,
A curtain moved on its brazen rod,
A pushed back chair,
Downstairs the slam
Of a sudden door, the swish of the air,

Like water parted, as one comes through
Whom the soul fears and yet is fain
To behold and touch; yet all's so new
And strange, and quite impossibly true,
That the fluttered pulse throbs in the wrist,
And the hair lifts, and you sit upright
Stabbed and startled by sudden light—
Well, so tonight,
The curtained sky is rent in twain
By a presence, a voice, a travelling flame,
And I think I've got a marconigram
Direct from God,
"Come and see
The wondrous things I have wrought for thee,
I, the Artist and Ancient of Days,
Am lonely till I have thy praise;
Keep thy tryst
With me, the Lord,
Lo, I have spoken—heed my word."

We have heard that voice thro' the midnight hollow,
"Follow, follow, follow."
We, who have known the splendour of living,
The glory of strife and the greatness of giving,
We, discontent with a lesser task
Than the most we can do or man can ask,
Conscripts of glory, we, who know
Our utmost joy in utmost striving,
And so we arise and go.

FINIS